

THE DIAL



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HE, THE ONE WHO GETS SLAPPED

BY LEONID ANDREYEV

Translated from the Russian by Gregory Zilboorg

INTRODUCTION

LEONID ANDREYEV as a literary figure was born in the gloomy atmosphere of depression of the 'nineties. He thus appeared upon the literary stage at a period when the old and splendid generation of Turgenev and Dostoevsky had already passed away and when Chekhov had begun to demonstrate before the reader the gloom and colourlessness of Russian life.

This was a period when the social forces of Russia were half destroyed by the reaction under Alexander III, and when the young generation was trying to rest and to get away from the strain of social hopes and despair. This period, briefly speaking, was a period of melancholy, of commonplace, everyday preoccupations, and of dull *terre à terre* philosophy.

It must be borne in mind that literature was the only outlet for the moral and intellectual forces of Russia. Political reaction, censorship, complete absence of civil liberties, and the cult of popular ignorance upon which Czardom based its power, all these made the written artistic word almost the sole expression of Russian social longings and idealistic expectations.

It is therefore only natural that Russian literature in its general development is closely interwoven with the political and social conditions of Russia at the given moment. The 'nineties were a period of depression. After the assassination of Alexander II

(1881) and the subsequent tightening of the chain of reaction, combined with a general *débâcle* in progressive and radical circles, the Russian intellectual fell into a state of pessimism. His faith in an early liberation was shattered, his hope of recovery was broken. Chekhov is the most characteristic representative of that period; he himself called his heroes "the dull-grey people."

Maxim Gorki and Leonid Andreyev appeared almost simultaneously at that time. The former brought the message of a rebel spirit which forecast a new moral upheaval, a new social protest; the latter appeared clad in the gloom of his time, which he strangely combined with a spirit of almost anarchistic revolt. From the point of view of historical completeness Leonid Andreyev is more representative of the epoch, demonstrating at once two contradictory elements of the Russia of the 'nineties: lack or even absence of faith interwoven with protest and mutiny.

Andreyev is symbolic and romantic. Her Majesty Fate and His Excellency Accident, these are the two dark, unknown, at times brutal forces which dwelt ever before his mind's eye. His symbols are full of horror and at times unbending atrocity. Beginning with his short stories, *In Fog*, *The Life of Basil of Thebes*, through his dramas, *The Life of Man*, and *Anathema*, until his last writings, he saw human beings in the form of ghosts and ghosts in the form of human beings dominating every step, every breath of life. Still his gruesome symbolism, despite his genius for rendering his images in a clear-cut, almost crystalline manner, did not appeal to many of his contemporaries because the dark shroud in which Andreyev enveloped life was impenetrable and at times it was impossible to discern in that gloom the few values which Andreyev still found in life. Leo Tolstoy said once: "Leonid Andreyev tries to frighten me, but I am not afraid."

Even in his splendid realistic dramas it is difficult for Andreyev to rid himself of the habit of symbolizing and dimming the few rays of light which try to filter through.

There was nevertheless a little corner in Andreyev's artistic heart where there appeared some indefinite hope which never acquired a specific artistic form, but which was alluded to many times in his writings. In his short story, *Thought*, he makes fragmentary allusions to his half-hope, half-idea: "If the lot of the Man be to become a God, his throne will be the Book," says the hero.

But the red laugh of the Russo-Japanese war, the abortive revolution of 1905, the general ignorance and darkness of the masses, the strain of the last war, the depreciation of human life as a value in itself, brought Leonid Andreyev to the last step of the pessimistic ladder which he was ever descending into the abyss of hopelessness. This state of mind is best illustrated by his last dramatic work, *He, the One Who Gets Slapped*.

Here we see a man of high education, of great intellectual achievement, who leaves life, willingly in appearance, but forcibly in fact. The relations of man to man, of group to group, according to Andreyev are such that the Man is forced to efface himself. Even Thought, or the Book, could not help the Man to become a God. He becomes a clown. He performs stunts, he gets slaps; the public laughs, being unaware that this laughter is a mockery at itself, at its culture, at its thought, at its achievement.

The characters of the play, as the reader will see, are depicted with a bitter sarcasm and unfriendliness, for Andreyev seems to have lost his last faith in the Man. The good, the innocent and clean heart is bound to suffer and die. His Consuelo, Zinida, Bezano are only stray rays of light out of place in the world and even in the world-circus which is full of spiders, champagne, and human outcasts. Andreyev does not blame these outcasts. On the contrary, he feels sympathy, if for anybody, for just these clowns, jugglers, and bareback-riders; but life, this strange combination of fate, accident, and cowardly slander, is stronger, and they collapse under the burden of this combination.

He is perhaps the best work of Andreyev, at any rate his best dramatic work. It is more adapted to stage conditions than his previous plays and is not overcrowded with symbolic ghosts. Furthermore, *He* is a remarkable summary of Andreyev's philosophy.

GREGORY ZILBOORG

HE, THE ONE WHO GETS SLAPPED

CAST OF CHARACTERS

CONSUELO—a bareback rider in a circus. Billed as "The Bareback Tango Queen."

MANCINI—Consuelo's father.

HE—a clown in Briquet's circus. Billed as "HE, The One Who Gets Slapped."

BRIQUET—Manager of the circus.

ZINIDA—a lion tamer, Briquet's wife.

ALFRED BEZANO—a bareback rider.

A GENTLEMAN.

BARON REGNARD.

JACKSON—a clown.

TILLY {—musical clowns.
POLLY }

THOMAS, ANGELICA, and other actors and actresses of Briquet's circus.

The action takes place in one of the large cities of France.

ACT I

A very large, rather dirty room, with whitewashed walls. To the left, in a niche, is a window, the only outside window in the room, opening on a court-yard. The light from it is so dim that even by day the electricity has to be turned on.

At the very top of the centre-back wall is a row of small dusty windows. They open on the circus hall. At night, when the performance is going on, a bright light shines through. By day they are dark. In the same wall is a large white door, reached by two stone steps, and nailed fast.

On the right, almost in the corner, is a high, wide, arched doorway which leads to the stables and the ring. By day it opens into pale darkness, at night into pale light.

The room is used for many purposes. It is the office of Papa Briquet, manager of the circus; here he keeps his little desk. It is the cloak-room of some of the actors. It is also the room where the cast gathers between calls, during rehearsals or performances. Again, it is a check-room for used circus property, such as gilt armchairs, scenery for pantomimes, and other wares of the circus household. The walls are covered with circus announcements and glaring posters.

The time is morning. In the circus hall a rehearsal is going on, and preparations are being made for the evening performance. As the curtain goes up, the cracking whip and the shouts of the riding-master are heard from the ring. The stage is empty for a few seconds, then enter Tilly and Polly,

the musical clowns, practising a new march. Playing on tiny pipes, they step from the dark doorway to the window. Their music is agreeable to the ear, but small, mincing, artificially clown-like, like their mincing steps; they wear jackets and resemble each other; same smooth-shaven face, same height; Tilly, the younger, has a scarf around his neck; both have their derbies on the backs of their heads. Tilly glances through the window, then they turn about, still marching.

POLLY (interrupting the march): Stop, you're out again! Now, listen—
(He stands close to Tilly and plays into his face. Tilly absent-mindedly listens, scratching his nose.) There! Come on now! (They resume their music and marching. As they reach the door they meet the manager and Mancini; the latter walks behind the manager, and is gnawing at the knob of his gold-mounted cane. Count Mancini is tall and slight. The seams of his clothes are worn and he keeps his coat buttoned tight. He assumes extremely graceful manners, takes affected poses, and has a special fondness for toying with his cane, with aristocratic stylishness. When he laughs, which happens often, his thin sharp face takes on a marked resemblance to a satyr. The manager, "Papa" Briquet, is a stout quiet man of average height. His bearing is hesitant. The clowns make room for the gentlemen. The manager looks questioningly at the older man.)

POLLY (with an affected accent): Our moosic for the pantomime! The March of the Ants!

BRIQUET: Ha! Yes!

(The gentlemen walk in. The clowns resume their music, Polly marching on, then turning, the younger following.)

POLLY: Papa Briquet, Jack is working very badly to-day.

BRIQUET: What's the matter with him?

POLLY: He has a sore throat. You'd better take a look at him.

BRIQUET: All right. Come on, Jack. Open your mouth! Wider—wider.
(Turns clown's face to the light near the window and examines him closely and seriously.) Just smear it with iodine.

POLLY: I told him so. I said it was nothing! Oh! Come on. (They go away playing, marching, practising their funny mincing steps. The manager sits down. Mancini strikes a pose by the wall, smiling ironically.)

MANCINI: So. You give them medical treatment, too! Look out, Papa Briquet, you have no licence.

BRIQUET: Just a little advice. They're all so afraid for their lives.

MANCINI: His throat is simply burnt with whiskey. These two fellows get drunk every night. I am amazed, Papa Briquet, to see you pay so little attention to their morals. (He laughs.)

BRIQUET: You make me sick, Mancini.

MANCINI: Count Mancini is at your service!

BRIQUET: You make me sick, Count Mancini. You poke your nose into everything, you disturb the artists in their work. Some day you'll get a thrashing, and I warn you that I shan't interfere.

MANCINI: As a man of superior associations and education I cannot be expected to treat your actors as my equals! What more can you ask,

Briquet? You see that I do you the honour of speaking with you quite familiarly, quite simply.

BRIQUET: Ha! ha! ha! (Slightly threatening) Really!—

MANCINI: Never mind my joke. What if they did dare attack me—ever seen this, Briquet? (He draws a stiletto out of his cane and advances it silently.) Useful little thing. By the way, you have no idea of the discovery I made yesterday in a suburb. Such a girl! (Laughs.) Oh, well! all right, all right—I know you don't like that sort of sport. But look here, you must give me a hundred francs!

BRIQUET: Not a sou.

MANCINI: Then I'll take away Consuelo—that's all—

BRIQUET: Your daily threat!

MANCINI: Yes, my threat! And you would do the same, if you were as shamefully hard up as I am. Now look here, you know as well as I do that I have to live up to my name somehow, keep up the family reputation. Just because the tide of ill-fortune which struck my ancestors compelled me to make my daughter, the Countess Veronica, a bareback rider—to keep us from starving—do you understand—you heartless idiot!

BRIQUET: You chase the girls too much! Some day you'll land in jail, Mancini!

MANCINI: In jail? Oh, no! Why, I have to uphold our *name*, the splendour of my family, (laughs) haven't I? The Mancinis are known all over Italy for their love of girls—just girls! Is it my fault if I must pay such crazy prices for what my ancestors got free of charge? You're nothing but an ass, a *parvenu* ass. How can you understand Family Traditions? I don't drink—I stopped playing cards after that accident—no, you need not smile. Now if I give up the girls, what will be left of Mancini? Only a coat of arms, that's all—In the name of family traditions, give me a hundred francs!

BRIQUET: I told you no, I won't.

MANCINI: You know that I leave half of the salary for Consuelo—but—perhaps you think I do not love my child—my only daughter, all that remains to me as a memory of her sainted mother—what cruelty! (Pretends to cry, wipes his eyes with a small and dirty lace handkerchief, embroidered with a coronet.)

BRIQUET: Why don't you say, rather, that she is foolish enough to give you half her salary. You make me sick—

(Enter Zinida, the lion tamer; burningly beautiful, her self-confident, commanding gestures at first glance give an impression of languor. She is Briquet's unmarried wife.)

ZINIDA (to Mancini): Good morning.

MANCINI: Madame Zinida! This barbarian, this brute may pierce me with his dagger, but I cannot control the expression of my love! (Kneels facetiously before her) Madame! Count Mancini has the honour of asking you to be his wife. . . .

ZINIDA (to Briquet): Money?

BRIQUET: Yes.

ZINIDA: Don't give him any. (Sits down wearily on a torn sofa, shuts her eyes. Mancini gets up and wipes his knees.)

MANCINI: Duchess! Don't be cruel. I am no lion, no tiger, no savage beast which you are accustomed to tame. I am merely a poor domestic animal, who wants, miaow, miaow, a little green grass.

ZINIDA (*without opening her eyes*): Jim tells me you have a teacher for Consuelo. What for?

MANCINI: The solicitude of a father, duchess, the solicitude and the tireless anxiety of a loving heart. The extreme misfortunes of our family, when I was a child, have left some flaws in her education. Friends, the daughter of Count Mancini, Countess Veronica, can barely read! Is that admissible? And you, Briquet, heartless brute, you still ask why I need money!

ZINIDA: Artful!

BRIQUET: What are you teaching her?

MANCINI: Everything. A student had been giving her lessons, but I threw him out yesterday. He had the nerve to fall in love with Consuelo and stood there miaowing at the door like a cat. Everything, Briquet, that you don't know—literature, mythology, orthography—

(*Two young actresses appear, with small fur coats thrown over their light dresses. They are tired and sit down in the corner.*)

MANCINI: I do not wish my daughter—

ZINIDA: Artful!

BRIQUET: You are stupid, Mancini. What do you do it for? (*In a didactic tone*) You are fearfully stupid, Mancini. Why does she need to learn? Since she is here she need never know anything about that life. Don't you understand? What is geography? If I were the government I would forbid artists to read books. Let them read the posters, that's enough.

(*During Briquet's speech, the two clowns and another actor enter. They sit down wearily.*)

BRIQUET: Right now, your Consuelo is an excellent artist, but just as soon as you teach her mythology, and she begins to read, she'll become a nuisance, she'll be corrupted, and then she'll go and poison herself. I know those books, I've read 'em myself. All they teach is corruption, and how to kill oneself.

FIRST ACTRESS: I love the novels that come out in the newspaper.

BRIQUET: That shows what a foolish girl you are. You'll be done for in no time. Believe me, my friends, we must forget entirely what is happening out there. How can we understand all that goes on there?

MANCINI: You are an enemy of enlightenment, you are an obscurantist, Briquet.

BRIQUET: And you are stupid. You are from out there. What has it taught you? (*The actors laugh.*) If you'd been born in a circus as I was, you'd know something. Enlightenment is plain nonsense—nothing else. Ask Zinida. She knows everything they teach out there—geography, mythology— Does it make her any happier? You tell them, dear.

ZINIDA: Leave me alone, Louis.

MANCINI (*angrily*): Oh! Go to the devil! When I listen to your asinine philosophy, I'd like to skin you for more than a paltry hundred francs—

for two hundred—for a thousand. Great God! What an ass of a manager! Yes, right before every one of them I want to say that you are a stingy old skinflint—that you pay starvation wages. I'll make you give Consuelo a raise of a hundred francs. Listen, all you honest vagabonds, tell me—who is it draws the crowd that fills the circus every night? You? a couple of musical donkeys? Tigers, lions? Nobody cares for those hungry cats!

ZINIDA: Leave the tigers alone.

MANCINI: Beg your pardon, Zinida. I did not mean to hurt your feelings—honestly. I really marvel at your furious audacity—at your grace—you are a heroine—I kiss your tiny hands. But what do they understand about heroism? (*An orchestra softly plays the Tango in the circus. He continues with enthusiasm.*) Hear! hear! Now tell me, honest vagabonds, who but Consuelo and Bezano draws the crowds! That Tango on horseback—it is—it is— Oh, the devil! Even his fatuousness the Pope could not withstand its lure.

POLLY: True! It's a great trick—wasn't the idea Bezano's?

MANCINI: Idea! Idea! The lad's in love, like a cat—that's the idea. What's the good of an idea without a woman! You wouldn't dance very far with your idea alone, eh, Papa Briquet?

BRIQUET: We have a contract.

MANCINI: Such base formalities.

ZINIDA: Give him ten francs and let him go.

MANCINI: Ten! Never! Fifteen! Don't be stubborn, Papa. For the traditions of my house—twenty. I swear—on my honour—I can't do with less. (*Briquet hands him twenty francs. Nonchalantly*) Merci. Thanks.

ZINIDA: Why don't you take it from your baron?

MANCINI (*raising his eyebrows haughtily, quite indignant*): From the Baron? Woman! who do you think I am that I should be beholden to a stranger?

ZINIDA: You're plotting something artful. I know you very little, but I guess you're an awful scoundrel.

MANCINI (*laughs*): Such an insult from such beautiful lips.

(Enter an "artist," apparently an athlete.)

ATHLETE: Papa Briquet, there's a gentleman from beyond the grave asking for you.

ACTRESS: A ghost?

ATHLETE: No. He seems alive. Did you ever see a drunken ghost?

BRIQUET: If he's drunk, tell him I'm out, Thomas. Does he want to see me or the Count?

ATHLETE: No, you. Maybe he's not drunk, but just a ghost.

MANCINI (*draws himself together, puffs up*): A society man?

ATHLETE: Yes. I'll tell him to come in.

(One hears the whip cracking in the ring. The Tango sounds very low and distant—then comes nearer—louder. Silence.)

BRIQUET (*touching Zinida's arm*): Tired?

ZINIDA (*drawing back a little*): No.

POLLY: Your red lion is nervous to-day, Zinida!

ZINIDA: You shouldn't tease him.

POLLY: I played a melody from *Traviata* for him. And he sang with me. Wouldn't that be a good trick to stage, Papa Briquet?

(Thomas brings in the gentleman, points out the manager, and goes heavily away. The gentleman is not young, and he is ugly, but his rather strange face is bold and lively. He wears an expensive overcoat, with a fur collar, and holds his hat and gloves in his hand.)

THE GENTLEMAN *(bowing and smiling)*: Have I the pleasure of addressing the manager?

BRIQUET: Yes. Won't you sit down, please? Tilly, bring a chair.

GENTLEMAN: Oh! Don't trouble. *(Looks around.)* These are your artists? Very glad—

MANCINI *(straightening and bowing slightly)*: Count Mancini.

GENTLEMAN *(surprised)*: Count?

BRIQUET *(indefinitely)*: Yes, Count. And whom have I the honour of—

GENTLEMAN: I don't quite know myself—yet. As a rule you choose your own names, don't you? I have not chosen yet. Later you might advise me about it. I have an idea already, but I am afraid it sounds too much like literature—you know.

BRIQUET: Literature?

GENTLEMAN: Yes! Too sophisticated. *(They all look surprised.)* I presume these two gentlemen are clowns? I am so glad. May I shake hands with them? *(Stands up and shakes hands with clowns, who make silly faces.)*

BRIQUET: Excuse me—but what can I do for you?

GENTLEMAN *(with the same pleasant, confident smile)*: Oh. You do something for me? No. I want to do something for you, Papa Briquet.

BRIQUET: Papa Briquet? But you don't look like . . .

GENTLEMAN *(reassuringly)*: It's all right. I shall become "like." These two gentlemen just made remarkable faces. Would you like to see me imitate them? Look! *(He makes the same silly faces as the clowns.)*

BRIQUET: Yes! *(Involuntarily)* You are not drunk, sir?

GENTLEMAN: No. I don't drink as a rule. Do I look drunk?

POLLY: A little.

GENTLEMAN: No—I don't drink. It is a peculiarity of my talent.

BRIQUET *(familiarly)*: Where did you work before? Juggler?

GENTLEMAN: No. But I am glad you feel in me a comrade, Papa Briquet. Unfortunately I am not a juggler, and have worked nowhere—I am—just so.

MANCINI: But you look like a society man.

GENTLEMAN: Oh, you flatter me, Count. I am just so.

BRIQUET: Well, what do you want? You see I am obliged to tell you that everything is taken.

GENTLEMAN: That's immaterial. I want to be a clown, if you will allow me. *(Some of the actors smile, Briquet begins to grow angry.)*

BRIQUET: But what can you do? You're asking too much. What can you do?

GENTLEMAN: Why! Nothing! Isn't that funny! I can't do a thing.

BRIQUET: No, it's not funny. Any scoundrel knows that much.

GENTLEMAN *(rather helpless, but still smiling and looking around)*: We can invent something—

BRIQUET (ironically): From literature?

(*The clown Jackson enters slowly without being noticed by the others. He stands behind the gentlemen.*)

GENTLEMAN: Yes, one can find something literary, too. A nice little speech for instance on, let's say, a religious topic. Something like a debate among the clowns.

BRIQUET: A debate! The devil! This is no academy.

GENTLEMAN (sadly): I am very sorry. Something else then. Perhaps a joke about the creation of the world and its rulers?

BRIQUET: What about the police? No, no—nothing like that!

JACKSON (coming forward): The rulers of the world? You don't like them? I don't either. Shake.

BRIQUET (introducing): Our chief clown, the famous Jackson.

GENTLEMAN (enthusiastically): Great heavens—you! Allow me to shake hands with you heartily! You, with your genius, you have given me so much joy!

JACKSON: I'm glad indeed!

BRIQUET (shrugs his shoulders; to Jackson): He wants to be a clown! Look him over, Jim.

(*Jackson makes a motion at which the gentleman hurriedly removes his coat and throws it on a chair. He is ready for the examination. Jackson turns him round, looking him over critically.*)

JACKSON: Clown? Hm! Turn round then. Clown? Yes? Now smile. Wider—broader—do you call that a smile? So—that's better. There is something, yes—but for full developments— (Sadly) Probably you can't even turn a somersault?

GENTLEMAN (sighs): No.

JACKSON: How old are you?

GENTLEMAN: Thirty-nine. Too late? (Jackson moves away with a whistle. There is a silence.)

ZINIDA (softly): Take him.

BRIQUET (indignant): What the hell shall I do with him if he doesn't know a thing? He's drunk!

GENTLEMAN: Honestly I am not. Thank you for your support, Madame. Are you not the famous Zinida, the lion tamer, whose regal beauty and audacity—

ZINIDA: Yes. But I do not like flattery.

GENTLEMAN: It is not flattery.

MANCINI: You are evidently not accustomed to good society, my dear. Flattery? This gentleman expresses his admiration in sincere and beautiful words—and you—you are not educated, Zinida. As for myself— (Enter Consuelo and Bezano in circus costume.)

CONSUELO: You here, Daddy?

MANCINI: Yes, my child, you are not tired? (Kisses her on the forehead.) My daughter, sir, Countess Veronica. Known on the stage as Consuelo, The Bareback Tango Queen. Did you ever see her?

GENTLEMAN: I have enjoyed her work. It is marvellous!

MANCINI: Yes! Of course. Everyone admits it. And how do you like the name, Consuelo? I took it from the novel of George Sand. It means "Consolation."

GENTLEMAN: What a wonderful knowledge of books!

MANCINI: A small thing. Despite your strange intention, I can see, sir, that you are a gentleman. My peer! Let me explain to you, that only the strange and fatal misfortunes of our ancient family—"sic transit gloria mundi," sir.

CONSUELO: It's a bore, Daddy— Where's my handkerchief, Alfred?

BEZANO: Here it is.

CONSUELO (*showing the handkerchief to the gentleman*): Genuine Venetian. Do you like it?

GENTLEMAN (*again bowing*): My eyes are dazzled, how beautiful! Papa Briquet, the more I look around me the more I want to stay with you. (*Makes the face of a simpleton.*) On the one hand a count, on the other—

JACKSON (*nods approval*): That's not bad. Look here, think a bit—find something. Everyone here thinks for himself.

(*Silence. The gentleman stands with a finger on his forehead, thinking.*)

GENTLEMAN: Find something—find something . . . Eureka!

POLLY: That means *found*. Come!

GENTLEMAN: Eureka—I shall be among you, he who gets slapped.

(*General laughter. Even Briquet smiles.*)

GENTLEMAN (*looks at them smiling*): You see I made even you laugh—is that easy? (*All grow serious. Polly sighs.*)

TILLY: No, it's not easy. Did you laugh, Polly?

POLLY: Sure, a lot. Did you?

TILLY: I did. (*Imitating an instrument, he plays with his lips a melody at once sad and gay.*)

JACKSON: "He Who Gets Slapped," that's not bad.

GENTLEMAN: It's not, is it? I rather like it myself. It suits my talent. And comrades, I have even found a name—you'll call me "He." Is that all right?

JACKSON (*thinking*): "He"—Not bad.

CONSUELO (*in a singing, melodic voice*): "He" is so funny—"He"—like a dog. Daddy, are there such dogs?

(*Jackson suddenly gives a circus slap to the gentleman. HE steps back and grows pale.*)

GENTLEMAN: What!—(*General laughter covers his exclamation.*)

JACKSON: He, Who Gets Slapped. Or didn't you get it?

POLLY (*comically*): He says he wants more—

(*The gentleman smiles, rubbing his cheek.*)

GENTLEMAN: So sudden.—Without waiting.—How funny—you didn't hurt me, and yet my cheek burns.

(*Again there is loud laughter. The clowns cackle like ducks, hens, cocks; they bark. Zinida says something to Briquet, casts a glance toward Bezano, and goes out. Mancini assumes a bored air and looks at his watch. The two actresses go out.*)

JACKSON: Take him, Papa Briquet—he will push us.

MANCINI (*again looking at his watch*): But bear in mind, that Papa Briquet is as close as Harpagon. If you expect to get good money here you are mistaken. (*HE laughs.*) A slap? What's a slap? Worth only small

change, a franc and a half a dozen. Better go back to society; you will make more money there. Why for one slap, just a light tap, you might say, my friend, Marquis Justi, was paid fifty thousand lire!

BRIQUET: Shut up, Mancini. Will you take care of him, Jackson?

JACKSON: I can.

POLLY: Do you like music? A Beethoven sonata played on a broom, for instance, or Mozart on a bottle?

HE: Alas! No. But I will be exceedingly grateful if you will teach me. A clown! My childhood's dream. When all my school friends were thrilled by Plutarch's heroes, or the light of science—I dreamed of clowns. Beethoven on a broom, Mozart on bottles! Just what I have sought all my life! Friends, I must have a costume!

JACKSON: I see you don't know much! A costume (*putting his finger on his forehead*) is a thing which calls for long deep thought. Have you seen my Sun here? (*Strikes his posterior.*) I looked for it two years.

HE (*enthusiastically*): I shall think!

MANCINI: It is time for me to go. Consuelo, my child, you must get dressed. (*To HE.*) We are lunching with Baron Regnard, a friend of mine, a banker.

CONSUELO: But I don't want to go, Daddy. Alfred says I must rehearse to-day.

MANCINI (*horrified, holding up his hands*): Child, think of me, and what a situation you put me in! I promised the Baron, the Baron expects us. Why, it is impossible! Oh, I am in a cold sweat.

CONSUELO: Alfred says—

BEZANO (*drily*): She has to work. Are you rested? Then come on.

MANCINI: But—the devil take me if I know what to make of it. Hey, Bezano, bareback rider! Are you crazy? I gave you permission for Art's sake, to exercise my daughter's talent—and you—

CONSUELO: Go along, Papa, and don't be so silly. We've got to work, haven't we? Have lunch alone with your Baron. And Daddy, you forgot to take a clean handkerchief again, and I washed two for you yesterday. Where did you put them?

MANCINI (*ashamed, blushing*): Why, my linen is washed by the laundress, and you, Consuelo, are still playing with toys. It is stupid! You're a chatter-box. You don't think. These gentlemen might imagine Heaven knows what. How stupid. I'm off.

CONSUELO: Do you want me to write him a little note?

MANCINI (*angrily*): A little note? Your little notes would make a horse laugh! Good-bye.

(*He goes out toying angrily with his cane. The clowns follow him respectfully, playing a funeral march. HE and Jackson laugh. The actors disappear one by one.*)

CONSUELO (*laughing*): Do I really write so badly? And I love so to write. Did you like my note, Alfred—or did you laugh, too?

BEZANO (*blushing*): No, I did not. Come on, Consuelo.

(*They go, and meet Zinida, entering. Consuelo passes on.*)

ZINIDA: Are you going back to work, Bezano?

BEZANO (*politely*): Yes. To-day is a very bad day. How are your lions, Zinida? I think the weather affects them.

CONSUELO (*from the ring*): Alfred!

ZINIDA: Yes. Some one is calling you. You'd better go. (*Alfred goes out. To Briquet*) Are you finished?

BRIQUET: Right away.

JACKSON: Then good-bye till evening. Think about your costume, HE, and I shall look for some idea, too. Be here at ten to-morrow. Don't be late, or you'll get another slap. And I'll work with you.

HE: I shall not be late. (*He looks after Jackson who goes out.*) Must be a nice man. All the people about you are so nice, Papa Briquet. I suppose that good-looking bareback rider is in love with Consuelo, isn't he? (*Laughs.*)

ZINIDA: It's none of your business. For a newcomer you go poking your nose too far. How much does he want, Papa?

BRIQUET: Just a minute. See here, HE. I don't want to make a contract with you.

HE: Just as you please. Do you know what? Don't let us talk about money. You are an honest fellow, Briquet; you will see what my work is worth to you, and then—

BRIQUET (*pleased*): Now that's very nice of you. Zinida, the man really doesn't know anything.

ZINIDA: Well, do as he suggests. Now we must write it down. Where's the book?

BRIQUET: Here. (*To HE.*) I don't like to write (*gives book to Zinida*), but we have to put down the names of the actors, you know—it's police regulations. Then if anyone kills himself, or—

(*Again comes the sound of the Tango, and calls from the ring.*)

ZINIDA: What is your name?

HE (*smiling*): HE. I chose it, you know. Or don't you like it?

BRIQUET: We like it all right—but we have to have your real name. Have you a passport?

HE (*confused*): A passport? No, I have none. Or, rather, yes. I have something of the kind, but I had no idea the rules were strictly enforced here. What do you need papers for?

(*Zinida and Briquet look at each other. Zinida pushes the book aside.*)

ZINIDA: Then we can't take you. We cannot quarrel with the police, just on your account.

BRIQUET: She is my wife. I hadn't told you. She's right. You might get hurt by a horse, or hurt yourself—or do something. We don't know you, you see. I personally don't care, but out there, it's different, you see. For me a corpse is just a corpse—and I don't ask anything about him. It's up to God or the Devil. But they—they're too curious. Well, I suppose it's necessary for order. I don't know— Got a card?

HE (*rubs his head, thinking*): What shall I do? I have my card, but (*smiles*) you understand that I don't want my name to be known.

BRIQUET: Some story, hey?

HE: Yes, something like that. Why can't you imagine that I have no name? Can't I lose it as I might lose my hat? Or let some one else take it by mistake? When a stray dog comes to you, you don't ask his name—you simply give him another. Let me be that dog. (*Laughing*) HE—the Dog!

ZINIDA: Why don't you tell us your name, just the two of us. Nobody else need know it. Unless you should break your neck—

HE (hesitates): Honestly? (Zinida shrugs her shoulders.)

BRIQUET: Where people are honest, their word is good. One sees you come from out there.

HE: All right. But please, don't be surprised. (Gives Zinida his card. She looks at it, then hands it to Briquet, then both look at HE.)

BRIQUET: If it is true, sir, that you are really what is written here—

HE: For heaven's sake—for heaven's sake—this does not exist, but was lost long ago; it is just a check for an old hat. I pray you to forget it, as I have. I am HE Who Gets Slapped—nothing else. (Silence.)

BRIQUET: I beg your pardon, sir, but I must ask you again, I must humbly ask you—are you not drunk, sir? There is something in your eye—something—

HE: No, no. I am HE Who Gets Slapped. Since when do you speak to me like this, Papa Briquet? You offend me.

ZINIDA: After all, it's his business, Briquet. (She hides the card.) Truly you are a strange man. (Smiles.) And you have already noticed that Bezano is in love with the horse-girl? And that I love my Briquet, did you notice that, too?

HE (also smiling): Oh, yes. You adore him.

ZINIDA: I adore him. Now go with him, Briquet, show him the ring and the stables—I have something to write.

HE: Yes, yes, please. I am so happy. At last you have taken me, haven't you? It is true—you're not joking. The circus, the tan-bark, the ring in which I shall run getting my slaps. Yes, yes, Briquet, let's go. Until I feel the sawdust under my feet, I shall not believe it.

BRIQUET: All right then. (Kisses Zinida.) Come on.

ZINIDA: Just a minute—HE! Answer me a question. I have a man who takes care of the cages, a plain fellow whom nobody knows. He just cleans the cages you know; he walks in and out whenever he wants to, without even looking at the lions, as if he were perfectly at home. Why is that so? Nobody knows him, everybody knows me, everyone is afraid for me, while— And he is such a silly man—you will see him. (Laughs.) But don't you think of entering the cage yourself! My red one would give you such a slap!

BRIQUET (displeased): There you are again, Zinida—stop it.

ZINIDA (laughs): All right—go. Oh yes, Louis, send me Bezano. I have to settle an account with him.

(HE and the director go out. Zinida looks at the card once more then hides it. She gets up and walks quickly up and down the room. She stops to listen to the Tango, which ends abruptly. Then she stands motionless, looking straight at the dark opening of the door through which Bezano comes.)

BEZANO (entering): You called me, Zinida? What do you want? Tell me quickly, I have no time—

(Zinida looks at him silently. Bezano flushes with anger, and knits his eyebrows. He turns to the door to go.)

ZINIDA: Bezano!

BEZANO (stops, without looking up): What do you want? I have no time.

ZINIDA: Bezano! I keep hearing people say that you are in love with Consuelo. Is it true?

BEZANO (shrugging his shoulders): We work well together.

ZINIDA (takes a step forward): No—Tell me, Alfred, do you love her?

BEZANO (flushes like a boy, but looks straight into Zinida's eyes. Proudly): I do not love anybody. No, I love nobody. How can I? Consuelo? She is here to-day, gone to-morrow, if her father should take her away. And I? Who am I? An acrobat, the son of a Milanese shoemaker—She! I cannot even talk about it. Like my horses I have no words. Who am I to love?

ZINIDA: Do you love me? A little?

BEZANO: No. I told you before.

ZINIDA: Still no? Not even a little?

BEZANO (after a silence): I am afraid of you.

ZINIDA (wants to cry out, indignantly, but masters herself and lowers her eyes, as if in an effort to shut out their light; turns pale): Am I . . . so terrifying a woman—

BEZANO: You are beautiful, like a queen. You are almost as beautiful as Consuelo. But I don't like your eyes. Your eyes command me to love you—and I don't like to be commanded. I am afraid of you.

ZINIDA: Do I command, Bezano? No—only implore.

BEZANO: Then why not look at me straight? Now I have it. You know yourself that your eyes cannot implore. (Laughs.) Your lions have spoiled you.

ZINIDA: My red lion loves me—

BEZANO: Never! If he loves you, why is he so sad?

ZINIDA: Yesterday he was licking my hands like a dog.

BEZANO: And this morning he was looking for you to devour you. He thrusts out his muzzle and looks out, as if he sees only you. He is afraid of you, and he hates you. Or do you want me to lick your hands too, like a dog?

ZINIDA: No, Alfred, but I—I want to kiss your hand. (With passion) Give it to me!

BEZANO (severely): I am ashamed to listen to you when you speak like that.

ZINIDA (controlling herself): One should not torture another as you torture me. Alfred, I love you. No, I do not command. Look into my eyes—I love you. (Silence.)

BEZANO (turns to go): Good-bye.

ZINIDA: Alfred—

(HE appears in the doorway, and stops.)

BEZANO: Please never tell me any more that you love. I don't want it.

Otherwise I will quit. You pronounce the word love as if you were cracking me with your whip. You know it is disgusting—

(He turns brusquely and goes. Both notice HE; Bezano, frowning, passes out quickly. Zinida returns to her place at the desk, with a proudly indifferent expression.)

HE (coming in): I beg your pardon, but I—

ZINIDA: There you are again, poking your nose into everything, HE. Do you really want a slap?

HE (*laughing*): No. I simply forgot my overcoat. I didn't hear anything.

ZINIDA: I don't care whether you did or not.

HE: May I take my coat?

ZINIDA: Take it if it's yours. Sit down, HE.

HE: I am sitting down.

ZINIDA: Now tell me HE, could you love me?

HE (*laughing*): I? I and Love! Look at me, Zinida. Did you ever see a lover with such a face?

ZINIDA: One can succeed with such a face—

HE: That's because I am happy—because I lost my hat—because I am drunk—or perhaps I am not drunk. But I feel as dizzy as a young girl at her first ball. It is so nice here—slap me, I want to play my part. Perhaps it will awaken love in my heart, too. Love—(*as if listening to his own heart with pretended terror*) do you know—I feel it!

(*In the circus the Tango is played again.*)

ZINIDA (*listening too*): For me?

HE: No. I don't know. For everyone. (*Listens to the music.*) Yes, they are dancing—how beautiful Consuelo is—and how beautiful is the youth. He has the body of a Greek God; he looks as if he had been modeled by Praxiteles. Love! Love! (Silence, music.)

ZINIDA: Tell me, HE—

HE: At your service, Queen!

ZINIDA: HE, what shall I do, to make my lions love me?

CURTAIN

ACT II

The same room, during the evening performance. Occasional music, laughter, shrieks, and applause are audible. Through the small windows, back centre, the light is shining.

Consuelo and Baron Regnard occupy the stage; Consuelo wears her stage costume; she sits with her feet on the sofa, a small shawl covering her shoulders. Before her stands the Baron, a tall stout man in evening dress, a rose in his buttonhole; grasping the ground with feet well apart, he gazes at her with convex spider-like eyes.

BARON: Is it true that your father, the Count, has introduced you to a certain Marquis Justi, a very rich man?

CONSUELO (*surprised*): No, he is only joking. I have often heard him speak of a Marquis Justi but I have never seen him—

BARON: And do you know that your father is just a charlatan?

CONSUELO: Oh! Don't say that—Father is such a dear.

BARON: Did you like the jewels?

CONSUELO: Yes, very much. I was very sorry when Father told me I must return them. He said it would not be nice for me to keep them. I even cried a little about it.

BARON: Your father is only a beggar and a charlatan.

CONSUELO: Oh, no, don't scold him—he loves you so much.

BARON: Let me kiss your hand—

CONSUELO: Oh, no, it isn't proper! One may kiss the hand only when one says how do you do or good-bye. But in the meantime you can't.

BARON: Everybody is in love with you, that is why you and your father make such a fuss about yourselves. Who is that new clown they call HE? I don't like him, he's too shrewd a beast. . . . Is he in love with you, too? I noticed the way he looked at you. . . .

CONSUELO (*laughing*): Nothing of the kind. He is so funny! He got fifty-two slaps yesterday. We counted them. Think of it, fifty-two slaps! Father said, "if they had only been gold pieces."

BARON: And Bezano, Consuelo. . . . Do you like him?

CONSUELO: Yes, very much. He is so good-looking. HE says that Bezano and I are the most beautiful couple in the world. HE calls him Adam, and me Eve. But that's improper, isn't it? HE is *so* improper.

BARON: And does HE speak to you very often?

CONSUELO: Yes, often. . . . But I don't understand him. It seems as if he were drunk.

BARON: "Consuelo"! . . . It means in Spanish . . . Consolation. Your father is an ass. . . . Consuelo, I love you.

CONSUELO: Talk it over with Father.

BARON (*angry*): Your father is a swindler and a charlatan. He should be turned over to the police. Don't you understand that I *cannot* marry you?

CONSUELO: But Father says you can. . . .

BARON: No, I cannot. And what if I shoot myself? Consuelo, silly girl, I love you unbearably . . . unbearably, do you understand? I am probably mad . . . and must be taken to a doctor, yanked about, beaten with sticks. Why do I love you so much, Consuelo?

CONSUELO: Then, you'd better marry.

BARON: I have had a hundred women, beauties, but I didn't see them. You are the first and I don't see any one else. Who strikes man with love, God or the Devil? The Devil struck me. Let me kiss your hand.

CONSUELO: No. (*She thinks a while and sighs.*)

BARON: Do you think sometimes? What are you thinking about now, Consuelo?

CONSUELO (*with another sigh*): I don't know why, I just felt sorry for Bezano. (*Sighs again.*) He is so nice to me when he teaches me . . . and he has such a tiny little room.

BARON (*indignant*): You were there?

CONSUELO: No. He told me about it. (*Smiling*) Do you hear the noise in there? That's HE getting slapped. Poor thing . . . although I know it doesn't hurt, it's only make-believe. The intermission is coming soon.

(*The Baron throws away his cigar, takes two quick steps forward, and falls on his knees before the girl.*)

BARON: Consuelo—

CONSUELO: Please, don't. Get up. Please leave my hand alone.

BARON: Consuelo!

CONSUELO (*disgusted*): Get up please, it's disgusting—you're so fat.

(*The Baron gets up. Voices are heard near the door and in the ring. It is the intermission. The clowns come first, talking cheerfully and excitedly. HE leads them, in his clown's dress, with painted eyebrows and white nose; the others are applauding him. Voices of the actors calling: "Bravo! HE." Then come the actors and actresses, riding-masters, and the rest, all in costume. Zinida is not among them. Papa Briquet comes a little later.*)

POLLY: A hundred slaps! Bravo, HE!

JACKSON: Not bad, not bad at all. You'll make a career.

TILLY: He was the Professor to-day, and we were the students. Here goes another! (Gives him a clown's slap. Laughter. *All bid good evening to the Baron. He is politely rude to these vagabonds who bore him, and remains silent. They seem quite used to it. Enter Mancini. He is the same, and with the same cane.*)

MANCINI (shaking hands): What a success, Baron—and think of it—how the crowd does love slaps. (Whispering) Your knees are dusty, Baron, brush them off. The floor is very dirty in here. (Aloud) Consuelo, dear child, how do you feel? (Goes over to his daughter. Sound of laughing, chattering. The waiters from the buffet in the lobby bring in soda and wine. Consuelo's voice is heard.)

CONSUELO: And where is Bezano?

HE (bows before the baron, affecting intimacy): You do not recognize me, Baron?

BARON: Yes I do. You are the clown, HE.

HE: Yes I am HE Who Gets Slapped. May I presume to ask you, Baron, did you get your jewels back?

BARON: What!

HE: I was asked to return some jewels to you, and I take the liberty of—
(*The Baron turns his back on him—HE laughs loudly.*)

JACKSON: Whiskey and soda! Believe me, ladies and gents, HE will surely make a career. I am an old clown, and I know the crowd. Why to-day, he even eclipsed me—and clouds have covered my Sun. (Striking it.) They do not like puzzles, they want slaps! They are longing for them and dreaming about them in their homes. Your health, HE! Another whiskey and soda! HE got so many slaps to-day, there would be enough to go round the whole orchestra!

TILLY: I bet there wouldn't! (To Jackson) Shake!

POLLY: I bet there wouldn't—I'll go and count the old mugs.

A VOICE: The orchestra did not laugh—

JACKSON: Because they were getting it, but the galleries did, because they were looking at the orchestra getting slapped. Your health, HE!

HE: Your's Jim! Tell me, why didn't you let me finish my speech—I was just getting a good start.

JACKSON (seriously): My friend, because your speech was a sacrilege. Politics—all right. Manners—as much as you want. But Providence—leave it in peace. And believe me, friend, I shut your mouth in time. Didn't I, Papa Briquet?

BRIQUET (coming nearer): Yes. It was too much like literature. This is not an academy. You forget yourself, HE.

TILLY: But to shut one's mouth—faugh . . .

BRIQUET (*in a didactic tone*): Whenever one shuts one's mouth, it is always high time to shut it, unless one is drinking. Hey, whiskey and soda!

VOICES: Whiskey and soda for the Manager!

MANCINI: But this is obscurantism. Philosophizing again, Briquet?

BRIQUET: I am not satisfied with you to-day, HE. Why do you tease them? They don't like it. Your health! A good slap must be clean like a crystal—fft-fft! right side, left side, and done with it. They will like it; they will laugh, and love you. But in your slaps there is a certain bite, you understand, a certain smell—

HE: But they laughed, nevertheless!

BRIQUET: But without pleasure, without pleasure, HE. You pay, and immediately draw a draft on their bank; it's not the right game—they won't like you.

JACKSON: That's what I tell him. He had already begun to make them angry.

BEZANO (*entering*): Consuelo, where are you? I have been looking for you—come on. (*Both go out. The Baron, after hesitating a while, follows them. Mancini accompanies him respectfully to the door.*)

HE (*sighs*): You don't understand, my dear friends; you are simply old, and have forgotten the smell of the stage.

JACKSON: Aha! Who is old, my young man?

HE: Don't be angry, Jim. It's a play, don't you understand? I become happy when I enter the ring and hear the music. I wear a mask and I feel humorous. There is a mask on my face, and I play. I may say anything like a drunkard. Do you understand? Yesterday when I, with this stupid face, was playing the great man, the philosopher (*he assumes a proud monumental pose, and repeats the gesture of the play—general laughter*) I was walking this way, and was telling how great, how wise, how incomparable I was—how God lived in me, how high I stood above the earth—how glory shone above my head (*his voice changes and he is speaking faster*) then you, Jim, you hit me for the first time. And I asked you "What is it, they're applauding me?" Then, at the tenth slap, I said: "It seems to me that they sent for me from the Academy?" (*Acts, looking around him with an air of unconquerable pride and splendour. Laughter. Jackson gives him a real slap.*)

HE (*holding his face*): Why?

JACKSON: Because you're a fool, and play for nothing. Waiter, the check.

(*Laughter. The bell calls them to the ring. The actors go out in haste, some running. The waiters collect their money.*)

BRIQUET (*in a sing-song*): To the ring—to the ring—

MANCINI: I want to tell you something, HE. You are not going yet?

HE: No. I'll take a rest.

BRIQUET: To the ring—to the ring—

(*The clowns as they go sing in shrill, squeaky voices. Little by little they all disappear, and loud music begins. HE seats himself on the sofa with his legs crossed, and yawns.*)

MANCINI: HE, you have something none of my ancestors ever had—money.

Let's have a nice bottle on you. Waiter, please—(*The waiter who was taking up dishes, brings a bottle of wine and glasses and goes out.*)

HE: You're blue, Mancini. (*Stretches.*) Well, at my age, a hundred slaps—it seems pretty hard. So you're blue. How are things getting on with your girl?

MANCINI: Tess! Bad! Complications—parents—(*shudders*) Agh—

HE: Prison!

MANCINI (*laughing*): Prison! Mustn't I uphold the glory of my name now, eh? HE, I'm joking—but there is Hell in my heart. You're the only one who understands me. But tell me how to explain this passion? It will turn my hair grey, it'll bring me to prison, to the grave. I am a tragic man. HE—(*Wipes his eyes with a dirty handkerchief.*) Why don't I like things which are not forbidden? Why, at all moments, even at the very moment of ecstasy, must I be reminded of some law—it is stupid. HE, I am becoming an anarchist. Good God—Count Mancini an anarchist. That's the only thing I've missed.

HE: Isn't there a way of settling it somehow?

MANCINI: Is there a way of getting money, somehow?

HE: And the Baron?

MANCINI: Oh, yes! He's just waiting for it, the blood-sucker! He'll get what he's after. Some day, you'll see me give him Consuelo for ten thousand francs, perhaps for five!

HE: Cheap.

MANCINI: Did I say it was anything else? Do I want to do it? But these bourgeois are strangling me, they've got me by the throat. HE, one can easily see that you're a gentleman, and of good society, you understand me—I showed you the jewels which I sent back to him—damn honesty—I didn't even dare change the stones, put false ones—

HE: Why?

MANCINI: It would have queered the game. Do you think he didn't weigh the diamonds when he got them back?

HE: He will not marry her.

MANCINI: Yes he will. You don't understand. (*Laughs.*) The first half of his life, this man had only appetites—now love's got him. If he does not get Consuelo, he is lost, he is—like a withered narcissus. Plague take him with his automobiles. Did you see his car?

HE: I did. . . . Give Consuelo to the Jockey—

MANCINI: To Bezano? (*Laughs.*) What nonsense you do talk! Oh, I know. It's your joke about Adam and Eve. But please stop it. It's clever, but it compromises the child. She told me about it.

HE: Or give her to me.

MANCINI: Have you a billion? (*Laughs.*) Ah, HE, I'm not in the proper mood to listen to your clownish jokes— They say there are terrible jails in this country, and no discriminations are being made between people of my kind, and plain scoundrels. Why do you look at me like that? You're making fun of me?

HE: No.

MANCINI: I'll never get accustomed to those faces. You're so disgustingly made up.

HE: He will not marry her. You can be as proud as you please, Mancini, but he'll not marry her. What is Consuelo? She is not educated. When she is off her horse, any good housemaid from a decent house has

nicer manners, and speaks better. (*Nonchalantly*) Don't *you* think she's stupid?

MANCINI: No, she's not stupid. And you, **HE**, are a fool. What need has a woman of intelligence? Why, **HE**, you astonish me. Consuelo is an unpolished jewel, and only a real donkey does not notice her sparkle. Do you know what happened? I tried to begin to polish her—

HE: Yes, you took a teacher. And what happened?

MANCINI (*nodding his head*): I was frightened—it went too fast—I had to dismiss him. Another month or two, and *she* would have kicked *me* out. (*Laughs.*) The clever old diamond merchants of Amsterdam keep their precious stones unpolished, and fool the thieves. My father taught me that.

HE: The sleep of a diamond. It is only sleeping, then. You are wise, Mancini.

MANCINI: Do you know what blood flows in the veins of an Italian woman? The blood of Hannibal and Corsini—of a Borgia—and of a dirty Lombardi peasant—and of a Moor. Oh! an Italian woman is not of a lower race, with only peasants and gypsies behind her. All possibilities, all forms are included in her, as in our marvelous sculpture. Do you understand that, you fool? Strike here—out springs a washerwoman, or a cheap street girl whom you want to throw out, because she is sloppy and has a screechy voice. Strike there—but carefully and gently, for there stands a queen, a goddess, the Venus of the Capitol, who sings like a Stradivarius and makes you cry, idiot! An Italian woman—

HE: You're quite a poet, Mancini! But what will the Baron make of her?

MANCINI: What? What? Make of her? A baroness, you fool! What are you laughing at? I don't get you? But I am happy that this lovesick beast is neither a duke nor a prince—or she would be a princess and I—what would become of me? A year after the wedding they would not let me even into the kitchen (*laughing*) not even into the kitchen! I, Count Mancini, and she a—a simple—

HE (*jumping up*): What did you say? You are not her father, Mancini?

MANCINI: Tss—the devil—I am so nervous to-day! Heavens, who do you think I am? "Her father?" Of course (*tries to laugh*) how silly you are—haven't you noticed the family resemblance? Just look, the nose, the eyes— (*Suddenly sighs deeply.*) Ah, **HE**! How unhappy I am! Think of it. Here I am, a gentleman, nearly beaten in my struggle to keep up the honour of my name, of an old house, while there in the parquet—there sits that beast, an elephant with the eyes of a spider . . . and he looks at Consuelo . . . and . . .

HE: Yes, yes, he has the motionless stare of a spider—you're right!

MANCINI: Just what I say—a spider! But I must, I shall compel him to marry her. You'll see— (*Walking excitedly up and down, playing with his cane.*) You'll see! All my life I've been getting ready for this battle. (*He continues to walk up and down. Silence. Outside, great stillness.*)

HE (*listening*): Why is it so quiet out there? What a strange silence.

MANCINI (*disgusted*): I don't know. Out there it is quiet—but here (*touching his forehead with his cane*) here is storm, whirlwind. (*Bends over the clown.*) **HE**, shall I tell you a strange thing—an unusual trick

of nature? (*Laughs, and looks very important.*) For three centuries the Counts Mancini have had no children! (*Laughs.*)

HE: Then how were you born?

MANCINI: Sh! Silence! That is the secret of our sainted mothers! Ha-ha! We are too ancient a stock—too exquisitely refined to trouble ourselves with such things—matters in which a peasant is more competent than ourselves. (*Enter an usher.*) What do you want? The manager is on the stage.

THE USHER (*bows*): Yes, sir. Baron Regnard wished me to give you this letter.

MANCINI: The Baron? Is he there?

THE USHER: Baron Regnard has left. There is no answer.

MANCINI (*opening the envelope, his hand shaking*): The devil—the devil! (*The usher is going.*)

HE: Just a minute. Why is there no music? This silence . . .

THE USHER: It is the act with Madame Zinida and her lions. (*He goes. Mancini is reading the Baron's note for the second time.*)

HE: What's the matter, Mancini? You shine like Jackson's sun.

MANCINI: What's the matter, did you ask? What's the matter? What's the matter? (*Balancing his cane, he takes steps like a ballet-dancer.*)

HE: Mancini! (*Mancini rolls his eyes, makes faces, dances.*) Speak, you beast!

MANCINI (*holds out his hand*): Give me ten francs! Quick—ten francs—here, come on. (*Puts it automatically into his vest pocket.*) Listen, HE! If in a month I don't have a car of my own, you may give me one of your slaps!

HE: What! He's going to marry? He's decided?

MANCINI: What do you mean by "decided"? (*Laughs.*) When a man has the rope about his neck, you don't ask him about his health! Baron—(*Stops suddenly, startled. Briquet is staggering in like a drunken man, his hand over his eyes.*)

HE (*goes to him, touches his shoulder gently*): What is the matter, Papa Briquet? Tell me!

BRIQUET (*groaning*): Oh, oh, I can't . . . I can't . . . Ah—

HE: Something has happened? You are ill? Please speak.

BRIQUET: I can't look at it! (*Takes his hands from his eyes, opens them wide.*) Why does she do it? Ah, ah, why does she do it? She must be taken away; she is insane. I couldn't look at it. (*Shivers.*) They will tear her to pieces, HE—her lions—they will tear her—

MANCINI: Go on, Briquet. She is always like that. You act like a child. You ought to be ashamed.

BRIQUET: No—To-day she is mad! And what is the matter with the crowd? They are all like dead people—they're not even breathing. I couldn't stand it. Listen—what's that? (*All listen. There is the same silence.*)

MANCINI (*disturbed*): I'll go and see.

BRIQUET (*yelling*): No! Don't! You can't look—damned profession! Don't go. You will scorch her—every pair of eyes that looks at her—at her lions—no, no. It is impossible—it is a sacrilege. I ran away. . . . HE, they will tear her—

HE (*tries to be cheerful*): Keep cool, Papa Briquet—I had no idea you were such a coward. You ought to be ashamed. Have a drink. Mancini, give him some wine.

BRIQUET: I don't want any. Heavens, if it were only over— (*All listen.*) I have seen many things in my life, but this . . . Oh, she is crazy. (*All still listen. Suddenly the silence breaks, like a huge stone wall crashing. There is a thunder of applause, mixed with shouts, music, wild screams—half bestial, half human. The men give way, relieved.* Briquet sinks to a seat.)

MANCINI (*nervous*): You see—you see—you old fool!

BRIQUET (*sobs and laughs*): I am not going to allow it any more!

HE: Here she is!

(*Zinida walks in, alone. She looks like a drunken bacchante, or like a mad woman. Her hair falls over her shoulders dishevelled, one shoulder is uncovered. She walks unseeing, though her eyes glow. She is like the living statue of a mad Victory. Behind her comes an actor, very pale, then two clowns, and a little later Consuelo and Bezano. All look at Zinida fearfully, as if they were afraid of a touch of her hand, or her great eyes.*)

BRIQUET (*shouting*): You are crazy—you're a mad woman!

ZINIDA: I? No. Did you see? Did you see? Well? (*She stands smiling, with the expression of a mad Victory.*)

TILLY (*plaintively*): Cut it out, Zinida. Go to the devil!

ZINIDA: You saw, too! And! . . . what—

BRIQUET: Come home—come home. (*To the others*) You can do what you like here. Zinida, come home.

POLLY: You can't go, Papa. There's still your number.

ZINIDA (*her eyes meet those of Bezano*): Ah! Bezano. (*Laughs long and happily.*) Bezano! Alfred! Did you see? My lions do love me! (*Bezano, without answering, leaves the stage. Zinida seems to wither and grow dim, as a light being extinguished. Her smile fades, her eyes and face grow pale. Briquet anxiously bends over her.*)

BRIQUET (*in a slow voice*): A chair! (*Zinida sits. Her head drops on her shoulder, her arms fall, she begins to shiver and tremble. Some one calls, "cognac"—an actor runs to get it.*)

BRIQUET (*helpless*): What is the matter, Zinida darling?

MANCINI (*running about*): She must quiet down. Get out, get out—vagabonds! I'll fix everything, Papa Briquet. The wrap—where's the wrap? She's cold. (*A clown hands it to him; they cover her.*)

TILLY (*timidly*): Wouldn't you like some moosic?

MANCINI (*giving her some cognac*): Drink, Duchess, drink! Drink it all—that's it. (*Zinida drinks it like water, evidently not noticing the taste. She shivers. The clowns disappear one by one. Consuelo, with a sudden flexible movement, falls on her knees before Zinida and kisses her hands, warming them between her own.*)

CONSUELO: Dear, dear, you are cold! Poor little hands, dear good one, beloved one—

ZINIDA (*pushes her away, gently*): Ho—home. It will soon be over. It's nothing . . . I am ver—very . . . home. . . . You stay here, Briquet—you must. I'm all right.

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CONSUELO: You are cold? Here is my shawl.

ZINIDA: No—let me. . . . (*Consuelo gets up, and moves aside.*)

BRIQUET: And it's all because of your books, Zinida—your mythology.

Now tell me, why do you want those beasts to love you? Beasts! Do you understand, HE? You too, you're from that world. She'll listen more to you. Explain it to her. Whom can those beasts love? Those hairy monsters, with diabolic eyes?

HE (genially): I believe—only their equals. You are right, Papa Briquet —there must be the same race.

BRIQUET: Of course, and this is all nonsense—literature. Explain it to her, HE.

HE (takes on a meditative air): Yes, you are right, Briquet.

BRIQUET: You see, dear, silly woman—everybody agrees. . . .

MANCINI: Oh! Briquet, you make me sick; you are an absolute despot, an Asiatic.

ZINIDA (with the shadow of a smile, gives her hand to be kissed): Calm yourself, Louis. It is over—I am going home. (*She stands up, shaking, still chilled.*)

BRIQUET: But how? alone, dear?

MANCINI: What! fool! Did you imagine that Count Mancini would leave a woman when she needed help? I shall take her home—let your brutal heart be at rest—I shall take her home. Thomas, run for an automobile. Don't push me Briquet, you are as awkward as a unicorn . . . that's the way, that's the way— (*They are holding her, guiding her slowly toward the door. Consuelo, her chin resting in her hand, is following them with her eyes. Unconsciously she assumes a somewhat affected pose.*)

MANCINI: I'll come back for you, child—

(Only HE and Consuelo are left on the stage. In the ring, music, shrieks, and laughter begin again.)

HE: Consuelo—

CONSUELO: Is that you, HE, dear?

HE: Where did you learn that pose? I have seen it only in marble. You look like Psyche.

CONSUELO: I don't know, HE. (*She sighs and sits on the sofa, keeping in her pose the same artificiality and beauty.*) It's all so sad here, to-day. HE, are you sorry for Zinida?

HE: What did she do?

CONSUELO: I didn't see. I had closed my eyes, and didn't open them. Alfred says she is a wicked woman, but that isn't true. She has such nice eyes, and what tiny cold hands—as if she were dead. What does she do it for? Alfred says she should be audacious, beautiful, but quiet, otherwise what she does is only disgusting. It isn't true, is it, HE?

HE: She loves Alfred.

CONSUELO: Alfred? My Bezano? (*Shrugging her shoulders, and surprised*) How does she love him? The same as everyone loves?

HE: Yes—as everyone loves—or still more.

CONSUELO: Bezano? Bezano? No—it's nonsense. (*Pause; silence.*) What a beautiful costume you have, HE. You invented it yourself?

HE: Jim helped me.

CONSUELO: Jim is so nice! All clowns are nice.

HE: I am wicked.

CONSUELO (*laughs*): You? You are the nicest of all. Oh, goodness! Three acts more! This is the second on now. Alfred and I are in the third. Are you coming to see me?

HE: I always do. How beautiful you are, Consuelo.

CONSUELO: Like Eve? (*Smiles*.)

HE: Yes, Consuelo. And if the Baron asks you to be his wife, will you accept?

CONSUELO: Certainly, HE. That's all Father and I are waiting for. Father told me yesterday that the Baron will not hesitate very long. Of course I do not love him. But I will be his honest, faithful wife. Father wants to teach me to play the piano.

HE: Are those your own words—"his honest, faithful wife"?

CONSUELO: Certainly they are mine. Whose could they be? He loves me so much, the poor thing. Dear HE, what does "love" mean? Everybody speaks of love—love—Zinida, too! Poor Zinida! What a boring evening this has been! HE, did you paint the laughter on your face yourself?

HE: My own self, dear little Consuelo—

CONSUELO: How do you do it, all of you? I tried once, but couldn't do a thing. Why are there no women clowns? Why are you so silent, HE? You, too, are sad, to-night.

HE: No, I am happy to-night. Give me your hand, Consuelo, I want to see what it says.

CONSUELO: Do you know how? What a talented man you are! Read it, but don't lie, like a gypsy. (*HE goes down on one knee and takes her hand. Both bend over it.*) Am I lucky?

HE: Yes, lucky. But wait a minute—this line here—funny. Ah, Consuelo, what does it say, here! (*Acting*) I tremble, my eyes do not dare to read the strange, fatal signs. Consuelo—

CONSUELO: The stars are talking.

HE: Yes, the stars are talking. Their voices are distant and terrible; their rays are pale, and their shadows slip by, like the ghosts of dead virgins—their spell is upon thee, Consuelo, beautiful Consuelo. Thou standest at the door of Eternity.

CONSUELO: I don't understand. Does it mean that I will live long?

HE: This line—how far it goes. Strange! Thou wilt live eternally, Consuelo.

CONSUELO: You see, HE, you did tell me a lie, just like a gypsy!

HE: But it is written—here, silly—and here. Now think of what the stars are saying. Here you have eternal life, love, and glory; and here, listen to what Jupiter says. He says: "Goddess, thou must not belong to any one born on earth," and if you marry the Baron—you'll perish, you'll die, Consuelo. (*Consuelo laughs*.)

CONSUELO: Will he eat me?

HE: No. But you will die before he has time to eat you.

CONSUELO: And what will become of Father? Is there nothing about him here? (*Laughing, she softly sings the melody of the waltz, which is playing in the distance.*)

HE: Don't laugh, Consuelo, at the voice of the stars. They are far away,

their rays are light and pale, and we can barely see their sleeping shadows, but their sorcery is stern and dark. You stand at the gates of eternity. Your die is cast; you are doomed—and your Alfred, whom you love in your heart, even though your mind is not aware of it, your Alfred cannot save you. He, too, is a stranger on this earth. He is submerged in a deep sleep. He, too, is a little god who has lost himself, and Consuelo, never, never will he find his way to Heaven again. Forget Bezano—

CONSUELO: I don't understand a word. Do the gods really exist? My teacher told me about them. But I thought it was all tales! (Laughs.)

And my Bezano is a god?

HE: Forget Bezano! Consuelo, do you know who can save you? The only one who can save you? —I.

CONSUELO (*laughing*): You, HE?

HE: Yes, but don't laugh! Look. Here is the letter H. It is I, HE.

CONSUELO: He Who Gets Slapped? Is that written here, too?

HE: That, too. The stars know everything. But look here, what more is written about him. Consuelo, welcome him. HE is an old god in disguise, who came down to earth only to love you, foolish little Consuelo.

CONSUELO (*laughing and singing*): Some god!

HE: Don't mock! The gods don't like such empty laughter from beautiful lips. The gods grow lonely and die, when they are not recognized. Oh, Consuelo! Oh, great joy and love! Do recognize this god, and accept him. Think a moment, one day a god suddenly went crazy!

CONSUELO: Gods go crazy, too?

HE: Yes, when they are half man, then they often go mad. Suddenly he saw his own sublimity, and shuddered with horror, with infinite solitude, with superhuman anguish. It is terrible, when anguish touches the divine soul!

CONSUELO: I don't like it. What language are you speaking? I don't understand—

HE: I speak the language of thy awakening. Consuelo, recognize and accept thy god, who was thrown down from the summit like a stone. Accept the god who fell to the earth in order to live, to play, and to be infinitely drunk with joy. Ewoë, Goddess!

CONSUELO (*tortured*): HE— I cannot understand. Let my hand alone.

HE (*stands up*): Sleep. Then wake again, Consuelo! And when thou wakest—remember that hour when, covered with snow-white sea-foam, thou didst emerge from the sky-blue waters. Remember heaven, and the slow eastern wind, and the whisper of the foam at thy marble feet.

CONSUELO (*her eyes are closed*): I believe—wait—I remember. Remind me further—

(HE is bowed over Consuelo, with lifted arms; he speaks slowly, but in a commanding voice, as if conjuring.)

HE: You see the waves playing. Remember the song of the sirens, their sorrowless song of joy. Their white bodies, shining blue through the blue waters. Or can you hear the sun, singing? Like the strings of a divine harp, spread the golden rays— Do you not see the hand of God, which gives harmony, light, and love to the world? Do not the mountains, in the blue cloud of incense, sing their hymn of glory? Remem-

ber, O Consuelo, remember the prayer of the mountains, the prayer of the sea. (*Silence.*)

HE (*commandingly*): Remember—Consuelo!

CONSUELO (*opening her eyes*): No! HE, I was feeling so happy, and suddenly I forgot it all. Yet something of it all is still in my heart. Help me again, HE, remind me. It hurts, I hear so many voices. They all sing "Consuelo—Consuelo." What comes after? (*Silence; pause.*) What comes after? It hurts. Remind me, HE. (*Silence—in the ring, the music suddenly bursts forth in a tempestuous circus gallop. Silence.*) HE, (*opens her eyes and smiles*) that's Alfred galloping. Do you recognize his music?

HE (*with rage*): Leave the boy alone! (*Suddenly falls on his knees before Consuelo.*) I love you, Consuelo, revelation of my heart, light of my nights, I love you, Consuelo. (*Looks at her in ecstasy and tears—and gets a slap; starting back.*) What's this?

CONSUELO: A slap! You forget who you are. (*Stands up, with anger in her eyes.*) You are HE Who Gets Slapped! Did you forget it? Some god! With such a face—slapped face! Was it with slaps they threw you down from heaven, god?

HE: Wait! Don't stand up! I—did not finish the play!

CONSUELO (*sits*): Then you were playing?

HE: Wait! One minute.

CONSUELO: You lied to me. Why did you play so that I believed you?

HE: I am HE Who Gets Slapped!

CONSUELO: You are not angry because I struck you? I did not want to really, but you were so—disgusting. And now you are so funny again. You have great talent, HE—or are you drunk?

HE: Strike me again.

CONSUELO: No.

HE: I need it for my play. Strike!

CONSUELO (*laughs, and touches his cheek with her fingertips*): Here, then!

HE: Didn't you understand that you are a queen, and I a fool who is in love with his queen? Don't you know, Consuelo, that every queen has a fool, and he is always in love with her, and they always beat him for it. HE Who Gets Slapped.

CONSUELO: No. I didn't know.

HE: Yes, every queen. Beauty has her fool. Wisdom, too. Oh, how many fools she has! Her court is overcrowded with enamoured fools, and the sound of slaps does not cease, even through the night. But I never received such a sweet slap as the one given by my little queen. (*Someone appears at the door. HE notices it, and continues to play, making many faces.*) Clown HE can have no rival! Who is there who could stand such a deluge of slaps, such a hail-storm of slaps, and not get soaked? (*Feigns to cry aloud.*) "Have pity on me. I am but a poor fool!"

(Enter two men: an actor, dressed as a bareback rider, and a gentleman from the audience. HE is spare, dressed in black, very respectable. He carries his hat in his hand.)

CONSUELO (*laughing, embarrassed*): HE, there is someone here. Stop!

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HE (*gets up*): Who is it? Who dares to intrude in the castle of my queen?
(HE stops, suddenly. *Consuelo, laughing, jumps up and runs away, after a quick glance at the gentleman.*)

CONSUELO: You cheered me up, HE. Good-bye. (*At the door*) You shall get a note to-morrow.

THE BAREBACK RIDER (*laughing*): A jolly fellow, sir. You wanted to see him? There he is. HE, the gentleman wants to see you.

HE (*in a depressed voice*): What can I do for you?

(*The actor bows, and goes away, smiling. Both men take a step toward each other.*)

GENTLEMAN: Is this you?

HE: Yes! It is I. And you? (*Silence.*)

GENTLEMAN: Must I believe my eyes? Is this you, Mr—

HE (*in a rage*): My name here is HE. I have no other name, do you hear? HE, Who Gets Slapped. And if you want to stay here, don't forget it.

GENTLEMAN: You are so familiar. As far as I can remember—

HE: We are all familiar, here. (*Contemptuously*) Besides, that's all you deserve, anywhere.

GENTLEMAN (*humbly*): You have not forgiven me, HE? (*Silence.*)

HE: Are you here with my wife? Is she too in the circus?

GENTLEMAN (*quickly*): Oh, no! I am alone. She stayed there!

HE: You've left her already?

GENTLEMAN (*humbly*): No—we have—a son. After your sudden and mysterious disappearance—when you left that strange and insulting letter—

HE (*laughs*): Insulting? You are still able to feel insults? What are you doing here? Were you looking for me, or is it an accident?

GENTLEMAN: I have been looking for you, for half a year—through many countries. And suddenly, to-day—by accident, indeed—I had no acquaintances here, and I went to the circus. We must talk things over... HE, I implore you. (*Silence.*)

HE: Here is a shadow I cannot lose! To talk things over! Do you really think we still have something to talk over? All right. Leave your address with the porter, and I will let you know when you can see me. Now get out. (*Proudly.*) I am busy.

(*The gentleman bows and leaves. HE does not return his bow, but stands with outstretched hand, in the pose of a great man, who shows a boring visitor the door.*)

CURTAIN

ACT III

The same room. Morning, before the rehearsal. HE is striding thoughtfully up and down the room. He wears a broad, parti-coloured coat, and a prismatic tie. His derby is on the back of his head, and his face is clean-shaven like that of an actor. His eyebrows are drawn, lips pressed together energetically, his whole appearance severe and sombre. After the entrance of the gentleman he changes. His face becomes clown-like, mobile—a living mask.

The gentleman comes in. He is dressed in black, and has an extremely well-bred appearance. His thin face is yellowish, like an invalid's. When he is upset, his colourless, dull eyes often twitch. HE does not notice him.

GENTLEMAN: Good morning, sir.

HE (turning around and looking at him absent-mindedly): Ah! It's you.

GENTLEMAN: I am not late? You look as if you did not expect me. I hope I am not disturbing you? You fixed this time yourself however, and I took the liberty—

HE: No manners, please. What do you want? Tell me quickly, I have no time.

GENTLEMAN (looking around with distaste): I expected you would invite me to some other place . . . to your home.

HE: I have no other home. This is my home.

GENTLEMAN: But people may disturb us here.

HE: So much the worse for you. Talk faster! (Silence.)

GENTLEMAN: Will you allow me to sit down?

HE: Sit down. Look out! That chair is broken.

(*The gentleman, afraid, pushes away the chair and looks helplessly around. Everything here seems to him dangerous and strange. He chooses an apparently solid little gilded divan, and sits down; puts his silk hat aside, slowly takes off his gloves, which stick to his fingers. HE observes him indifferently.*)

GENTLEMAN: In this suit, and with this face, you make a still stranger impression. Yesterday it seemed to me that it was all a dream; to-day . . . you . . .

HE: You have forgotten my name again? My name is HE.

GENTLEMAN: You are determined to continue talking to me like this?

HE: Decidedly! But you are squandering your time like a millionaire.

Hurry up!

GENTLEMAN: I really don't know . . . Everything here strikes me so . . . These posters, horses, animals, which I passed when I was looking for you . . . And finally, you, a clown in a circus! (With a slight, deprecating smile.) Could I expect it? It is true, when everybody there decided that you were dead, I was the only man who did not agree with them. I felt that you were still alive. But to find you among such surroundings—I can't understand it.

HE: You said you have a son, now. Doesn't he look like me?

GENTLEMAN: I don't understand?

HE: Don't you know that widows or divorced women often have children

by the new husband, which resemble the old one? This misfortune did not befall you? (*Laughs.*) And your book, too, is a big success, I hear.

GENTLEMAN: You want to insult me again?

HE (*laughing*): What a restless, touchy faker you are! Please sit still; be quiet. It is the custom here to speak this way. Why were you trying to find me?

GENTLEMAN: My conscience . . .

HE: You have no conscience. Or were you afraid that you hadn't robbed me of *everything* I possessed, and you came for the rest? But what more could you take from me now? My fool's cap with its bells? You wouldn't take it. It's too big for your bald head! Crawl back, you book-worm!

GENTLEMAN: You cannot forgive the fact that your wife . . .

HE: To the devil with my wife! (*The gentleman is startled and raises his eyebrows. HE laughs.*)

GENTLEMAN: I don't know. . . . But such language! I confess I find difficulty in expressing my thoughts in such an atmosphere, but if you are so . . . indifferent to your wife, who, I shall allow myself to emphasize the fact, loved you and thought you were a saint— (*HE laughs.*) Then what brought you to such a . . . step? Or is it that you cannot forgive me my success? A success, it is true, not entirely deserved. And now you want to take vengeance, with your humbleness, on those who misunderstood you. But you always were so indifferent to glory. Or your indifference was only hypocrisy. And when I, a more lucky rival . . .

HE (*with a burst of laughter*): Rival! You—a rival!

GENTLEMAN (*growing pale*): But my book!

HE: You are talking to me about *your* book? To me? (*The gentleman is very pale. HE looks at him with curiosity and mockery.*)

GENTLEMAN (*raising his eyes*): I am a very unhappy man.

HE: Why?

GENTLEMAN: I am a very unhappy man. You must forgive me. I am deeply, irreparably, and infinitely unhappy.

HE: But why? Explain it to me. (*Starts walking up and down.*) You say yourself that your book is a tremendous success, you are famous, you have glory; there is not a yellow newspaper in which you and your thoughts are not mentioned. Who knows me? Who cares about my heavy abstractions, from which it was difficult for them to derive a single thought? You—you are the great vulgarizer! You have made my thoughts comprehensible even to horses! With the art of a great vulgarizer, a tailor of ideas, you dressed my Apollo in a barber's jacket, you handed my Venus a yellow ticket, and to my bright hero you gave the ears of an ass. And then your career is made, as Jackson says. And wherever I go, the whole street looks at me with thousands of faces, in which—what mockery—I recognize the traits of my own children. Oh! How ugly your son must be, if he resembles me! Why then are you unhappy, you poor devil? (*The gentleman bows his head, plucking at his gloves.*) The police haven't caught you, as yet. What am I talking about? Is it possible to catch you? You always keep within the limits of the law. You have been torturing yourself up to now because you are not married to my wife. A notary public is always present at

your thefts. What is the use of this self-torture, my friend? Get married. I died. You are not satisfied with having taken only my wife? Let my glory remain in your possession. It is yours. Accept my ideas. Assume all the rights, my most lawful heir! I died! And when I was dying (*making a stupidly pious face*) I forgave thee! (*Bursts out laughing. The gentleman raises his head, and bending forward, looks straight into HE's eyes.*)

GENTLEMAN: And my pride?

HE: Have you any pride? (*The gentleman straightens up, and nods his head, silently.*) Yes! But please stand off a little. I don't like to look at you. Think of it. There was a time when I loved you a little, even thought you a little gifted! You—my empty shadow.

GENTLEMAN (*nodding his head*): I am your shadow. (*HE keeps on walking, and looks over his shoulder at the gentleman, with a smile.*)

HE: Oh, you are marvellous! What a comedy! What a touching comedy! Listen. Tell me frankly if you can; do you hate me very much?

GENTLEMAN: Yes! With all the hate there is in the world! Sit down here.

HE: You order me?

GENTLEMAN: Sit down here. Thank you. (*Bows.*) I am respected and I am famous, yes? I have a wife and a son, yes? (*Laughs slowly.*) My wife still loves you: our favourite discussion is about your genius. She supposes you are a genius. We, I and she, love you even when we are in bed. Tss! It is I who must make faces. My son—yes, he'll resemble you. And when, in order to have a little rest, I go to my desk, to my ink-pot, my books—there, too, I find you. Always you! Everywhere you! And I am never alone—never myself and alone. And when at night—you, sir, should understand this—when at night I go to my lonely thoughts, to my sleepless contemplations, even then I find your image in my head, in my unfortunate brain, your damned and hateful image! (*Silence. The gentlemen's eyes twitch.*)

HE (*speaking slowly*): What a comedy. How marvellously everything is turned about in this world: the robbed proves to be a robber, and the robber is complaining of theft, and cursing! (*Laughs.*) Listen, I was mistaken. You are not my shadow. You are the crowd. If you live by my creations, you hate me; if you breathe my breath, you are choking with anger. And choking with anger, hating me, you still walk slowly on the trail of my ideas. But you are advancing backward, advancing backward, comrade! Oh, what a marvellous comedy! (*Walking and smiling.*) Tell me, would you be relieved if I really had died?

GENTLEMAN: Yes! I think so. Death augments distance and dulls the memory. Death reconciles. But you do not look like a man who—

HE: Yes, yes! Death, *certainly!*

GENTLEMAN: Sit down here.

HE: Your obedient servant. Yes?

GENTLEMAN: Certainly, I do not dare to ask you—(*makes a grimace*) to ask you to die, but tell me: you'll never come back there? No, don't laugh. If you want me to, I'll kiss your hand. Don't grimace! I would have done so if you had died.

HE (*slowly*): Get out, vermin!

(Enter Tilly and Polly as in the first act, playing. For a long time they do not see the two men.)

HE: Jack!

TILLY: Ah! Good morning, HE. We are rehearsing. You know it is very hard. Jack has just about as much music in his head as my pig.

HE (*introducing, nonchalantly*): My friend . . . For the benefit performance? (The clowns bow to the gentleman, making idiotic faces.)

POLLY: Yes. What are you preparing? You are cunning, HE! Consuelo told me what you are preparing for the benefit performance. She leaves us soon, you know?

HE: Is that so?

TILLY: Zinida told us. Do you think she would get a benefit performance otherwise? She is a nice girl.

POLLY (*taking his small flute-pipe*): Here! Don't walk as if you were an elephant. Don't forget you are an ant! Come on! (They go off, playing.)

GENTLEMAN (*smiling*): These are your new comrades? How strange they are!

HE: Everything here is strange.

GENTLEMAN: This suit of yours. Black used to be very becoming to you. This one hurts the eyes.

HE (*looking himself over*): Why? It looks very nice. The rehearsal has begun. You must go away. You are disturbing us.

GENTLEMAN: You did not answer my question.

(Slow strains of the Tango from a small orchestra in the ring.)

HE (*listening absent-mindedly to the music*): What question?

GENTLEMAN (*who does not hear the music*): I pray you to tell me: will you ever come back?

HE (*listening to the music*): Never, never, never!

GENTLEMAN (*getting up*): Thank you. I am going.

HE: Never, never, never! Yes, run along. And don't come back. There, you were still bearable and useful for something, but here you are superfluous.

GENTLEMAN: But if something should happen to you . . . you are a healthy man, but in this environment, these people . . . how will I know? They don't know your name here?

HE: My name here is unknown, but *you will know*. Anything else?

GENTLEMAN: I can be at peace? On your word of honour? Of course I mean, comparatively, at peace?

HE: Yes, you may be comparatively at peace. Never! (They walk to the door, the gentleman stops.)

GENTLEMAN: May I come to the circus? You will allow me?

HE: Certainly. You are the audience! (Laughs.) But I shan't give you my card for a pass. But why do you want to come? Or do you like the circus so much, and since when?

GENTLEMAN: I want to look at you some more, and to understand, perhaps. Such a transformation! Knowing you as I do, I cannot admit that you are here without any idea. But what idea? (Looks short-sightedly at

HE. HE grimaces and thumbs his nose.)

GENTLEMAN: What is that?

HE: *My idea!* Good-bye, Prince! My regards to your respected wife, your Highness' wonderful son!

(Enter Mancini.)

MANCINI: You positively live in the circus, HE. Whenever I come, you are here. You are a fanatic in your work, sir.

HE (introducing): Prince Poniatovsky, Count Mancini.

MANCINI (drawing himself up): Very, very glad. And you too, Prince, you know my queer fellow? What a nice face he has, hasn't he? (He touches HE's shoulder patronizingly, with the tip of his cane.)

GENTLEMAN (awkwardly): Yes, I have the pleasure . . . certainly. Good-bye, Count.

MANCINI: Good-day, Prince.

HE (accompanying him): Look out, your Highness, for the dark passages: the steps are so rotten. Unfortunately I cannot usher you out to the street.

GENTLEMAN (in a low voice): You will not give me your hand when we say good-bye? We are parting for ever.

HE: Unnecessary, Prince. I shall still hope to meet you in the Kingdom of Heaven. I trust you will be there, too?

GENTLEMAN (with disgust): How you did succeed! You have so much of the clown in you!

HE: I am HE Who is Getting Slapped. Good-bye, Prince. (They take another step.)

GENTLEMAN (looking HE in the eyes; in a very low voice): Tell me, you are not mad?

HE (just as low, his eyes wide open): I am afraid, I am afraid you are right, Prince. (Still low) Ass! Never in your life did you use such a precise expression. I am mad!

(Playing the clown again, he shows him to the stair, with a big, affected gesture, a sweep of the hand and arm from his head to the floor, the fingers moving, to represent the steps.)

HE (laughing): He is down! Au revoir, Prince. (The gentleman goes out. HE comes skipping back, and takes a pose.) Mancini! Let us dance the Tango! Mancini, I adore you!

MANCINI (sitting back comfortably and playing with his cane): Don't forget yourself, HE. But you're hiding something, my boy. I always said you used to belong to society. It is so easy to talk to you. And who is this Prince? A genuine one?

HE: Genuine. A first rater. Like you!

MANCINI: A sympathetic face. Although at first I thought he was an undertaker who came for an order. Ah, HE! When shall I finally depart from these dirty walls, from Papa Briquet, stupid posters, and brutal jockeys!

HE: Very soon, Mancini.

MANCINI: Yes, soon. I am simply exhausted in these surroundings, HE! I begin to feel myself a horse. You are from society, still you don't yet know what high society means. To be at last decently dressed, to attend receptions, to display the splendour of wit; from time to time to have a game of baccarat (laughing) without tricks or cheating—

HE: And when evening comes, go to a suburb, where you are considered an honest father, who loves his children and—

MANCINI: And get hold of something, eh? (Laughs.) I shall wear a silk mask and two butlers shall follow me, thus protecting me from the dirty crowd. Ah, HE! The blood of my ancestors boils in me. Look at this stiletto. What do you think? Do you think that it was ever stained with blood?

HE: You frighten me, Count!

MANCINI (*laughing, and putting the stiletto back into its sheath*): Fool!

HE: And what about the girl?

MANCINI: Tss! I give those bourgeois absolute satisfaction, and they glorify my name. (Laughs.) The splendour of my name is beginning to shine with a force unknown. By the way, do you know what automobile firms are the best? Money is no object. (Laughs.) Ah! Papa Briquet!

(Enter Briquet in his overcoat and silk hat. They shake hands.)

BRIQUET: So, Mancini, you have obtained a benefit performance for your daughter, Consuelo! I only want to tell you, that if it were not for Zinida . . .

MANCINI: Listen, Briquet. Decidedly you are a donkey. What are you complaining of? The Baron has bought all the parquet seats for Consuelo's benefit performance. Isn't that enough for you, you miser?

BRIQUET: I love your daughter, Mancini, and I am sorry to let her go. What more does she need here? She has an honest job, wonderful comrades, and the atmosphere—?

MANCINI: Not *she*, but *I* need something. You understand? (Laughs.) I asked you to increase her salary, Harpagon! and now, Mr Manager, wouldn't you like to change me a thousand franc note?

BRIQUET (*with a sigh*): Give it to me.

MANCINI (*nonchalantly*): To-morrow. I left it at home. (All three laugh.) Laugh, laugh! To-day we are going with the Baron to his villa in the country; people say a very nice villa.

HE: What for?

MANCINI: You know, HE, the crazes of these billionaires. He wants to show Consuelo some winter roses, and me his wine cellars. He will come for us here. What is the matter, my little Consuelo?

(Enter Consuelo, almost crying.)

CONSUELO: I can't father! Tell him! What right has he to yell at me? He almost hit me with his whip!

MANCINI (*straightening up*): Briquet! I beg of you, as the Manager, what is this—a stable? To hit my daughter with a whip! I'll show this cub . . . a mere jockey. . . . No, the devil knows what it is, devil knows, I swear. . . .

CONSUELO: Father. . . .

BRIQUET: I will tell him.

CONSUELO: Please don't. Alfred didn't hit me. It's a silly thing, what I told you. What an idea! He is so sorry himself. . . .

BRIQUET: I shall tell him anyhow that—

CONSUELO: Don't you dare. You mustn't tell him anything. He didn't do a thing.

MANCINI (*still excited*): He must beg her pardon, the brat.

CONSUELO: He's already asked me to forgive him. How silly you all are! I simply cannot work to-day and I got nervous. What nonsense! The silly boy asked me to forgive him, but I didn't want to. HE, dear, good morning! I didn't notice you. How becoming your tie is! Where are you going, Briquet? To Alfred?

BRIQUET: No, I am going home, dear child. Zinida asked me to give you her love. She will not be here to-day, either. (*He goes out.*)

CONSUELO: Zinida is so nice, so good. Father, why is it that everybody seems so nice to me? Probably because I am going away soon. HE, did you hear the march that Tilly and Polly will play? (*Laughs.*) Such a cheerful one.

HE: Yes. I heard it. Your benefit performance will be remarkable.

CONSUELO: I think so, too. Father I am hungry. Have them bring me a sandwich.

HE: I'll run for it, my Queen.

CONSUELO: Please do, HE. (*Loudly*) But not cheese. I don't like it. (*Mancini and Consuelo are alone. Mancini, lying back comfortably in an armchair, scrutinizes his daughter with a searching eye.*)

MANCINI: I find something particular in you to-day, my child. I don't know whether it is something better or worse. You cried?

CONSUELO: Yes, a little. Oh, I am so hungry.

MANCINI: But you had your breakfast?

CONSUELO: No I didn't. That's why I am so hungry. You again forgot to leave me some money this morning, and without money . . .

MANCINI: Oh, the devil . . . what a memory I have. (*Laughs.*) But we shall have a very nice meal to-day. Don't eat very many sandwiches. . . . Yes, positively I like you. You must cry more often, my child; it washes off your superfluous simplicity. You become more of a woman.

CONSUELO: Am I so simple, Father?

MANCINI: Very. . . . Too much. I like it in others, but not in you. Besides, the Baron . . .

CONSUELO: Nonsense. I am not simple. But you know, Bezano scolded me so much, that even you would have cried. The devil knows . . .

MANCINI: Tsss. . . . Never say "the devil knows." It isn't decent.

CONSUELO: I say it only when I am with you.

MANCINI: You must not say it when you are with me, either. I know it without you. (*Laughs.*)

CONSUELO: Ha! Listen, Father! It's a new number of Alfred's. He makes such a jump! Jim says he's bound to break his neck. Poor fish. . . .

MANCINI (*indifferently*): Or his leg, or his back; they all have to break something. (*Laughs.*) They are breakable toys.

CONSUELO (*listening to the music*): I'll be lonesome without them, Father! The Baron promised to make a ring for me to gallop over as much as I want. He's not lying?

MANCINI: A ring? (*Laughs.*) No, it's not a lie. By the way, child, when speaking of Barons, you must say, "he does not tell the truth," and not, "he lies."

CONSUELO: It's just the same. It's nice to be wealthy, Father; you can do what you want, then.

MANCINI (*with enthusiasm*): Everything you want. Everything, my child. Ah! Our fate is being decided to-day. Pray our clement God, Consuelo. The Baron is hanging on a thread.

CONSUELO (*indifferently*): Yes?

MANCINI (*making the gesture with his fingers*): On a very thin, silk thread. I am almost sure that he will make his proposal to-day. (*Laughs.*) Winter roses, and the web of a spider amongst the roses, in order that my dear little fly . . . He is such a spider.

CONSUELO (*indifferently*): Yes, a terrible spider. Father, oughtn't I to let him kiss my hand yet?

MANCINI: By no means. You don't know yet, darling, what these men are.

CONSUELO: Alfred never kisses.

MANCINI: Alfred! Your Alfred is a cub, and he mustn't dare. But with men of that sort, you must be extremely careful, my child. To-day he would kiss your little finger, to-morrow your hand, and after to-morrow you would be on his lap.

CONSUELO: Foui! Father, what are you talking about? You should be ashamed!

MANCINI: But I know. . . .

CONSUELO: Don't you dare! I don't want to hear such dirty things. I shall give the Baron such a slap! A better one than HE—let him only try.

MANCINI (*with a deprecating gesture*): All men are like that, child.

CONSUELO: It isn't true. Alfred is not. Ah! But where is HE? He said he'd run, and he hasn't come back.

MANCINI: The buffet here is closed, and he has to get the sandwiches somewhere else. Consuelo, as your father, I want to warn you about HE. Don't trust him. He knows something. (*Twirls his finger close to his forehead.*) His game is not fair.

CONSUELO: You say it about everybody. I know HE; he is such a nice man, and he loves me so much.

MANCINI: Believe me, there is something in it.

CONSUELO: Father, you make me sick with your advice. Ah! HE, thank you.

(HE, *breathing somewhat heavily, enters and gives her the sandwiches.*)

HE: Eat, Consuelo.

CONSUELO: A hot one. . . . But you were running, HE? I am so grateful. (*Eats.*) HE, do you love me?

HE: I do, my Queen. I am your court fool.

CONSUELO (*eating*): And when I leave, will you find another queen?

HE (*making a ceremonious bow*): I shall follow after you, my incomparable one. I shall carry the train of your dress and wipe away my tears with it. (*Pretends to cry.*)

MANCINI: Idiot! (*Laughs.*) How sorry I am, HE, that those wonderful times have passed, when, in the court of the Counts Mancini, there were scores of motley fools who were given gold and kicks. . . . Now, Mancini is compelled to go to this dirty circus in order to see a good fool; and still, whose fool is he? Mine? No. He belongs to everybody who

pays a franc. We shall very soon be unable to breathe because of Democracy. Democracy, too, needs fools! Think of it, HE; what an unexampled impertinence.

HE: We are the servants of those who pay. But how can we help it, Count?

MANCINI: But is that not sad? Imagine: we are in my castle. I, near the fireplace with my glass of wine, you, at my feet chatting your nonsense, jingling your little bells—diverting me. Sometimes you pinch me too with your jokes: it is allowed by the traditions and necessary for the circulation of the blood. After a while—I am sick of you, I want another one. . . . Then I give you a kick and . . . Ah, HE, how wonderful it would be!

HE: It would be marvellous, Mancini!

MANCINI: Yes. Certainly! You would be getting gold coins, those wonderfully little yellow things. . . . Well, when I become rich, I shall take you. That's settled.

CONSUELO: Take him, Father . . .

HE: And when the count, tired of my chattering, will give me a kick with his Highness's foot, then I shall lie down at the little feet of my queen, and shall . . .

CONSUELO (*laughing*): Wait for another kick? I'm finished. Father, give me your handkerchief, I want to wipe my hands. You have another one in your pocket. Oh, my goodness, I must work some more!

MANCINI (*uneasy*): But don't forget, my child!

CONSUELO: No, to-day I won't forget! Go on!

MANCINI (*looking at his watch*): Yes, it is time. . . . He asked me to come over when you were ready. You must change your dress before I come back. (*Laughing.*) Signori, miei complimenti.

(*He goes out, playing with his cane. Consuelo sits on the corner of the divan, and covers herself with her shawl.*)

CONSUELO: Hello, HE! Come and lie down at my feet, and tell me something cheerful. . . . You know, when you paint the laughter on your face, you are very good looking, but now, too, you are very, very nice. Come on, HE, why don't you lie down?

HE: Consuelo! Are you going to marry the Baron?

CONSUELO (*indifferently*): It seems so. The Baron is hanging by a thread!

HE, there is one little sandwich left. Eat it.

HE: Thank you, my queen. (*Eats.*) And do you remember my prediction?

CONSUELO: What prediction? How quickly you swallow! Does it taste good?

HE: Very good. That if you marry the Baron, you . . .

CONSUELO: Oh, that's what you're talking about. . . . But you were making fun.

HE: Nobody can tell, my Queen. Sometimes one makes fun, and suddenly it turns out to be true; the stars never talk in vain. If sometimes it is difficult for a human being to open his mouth and to say a word, how difficult it must be for a star. Think of it.

CONSUELO (*laughing*): I should say. Such a mouth! (*Makes a tiny mouth.*)

HE: No, my dear little girl, were I in your place, I would think it over. And suppose suddenly you should die? Don't marry the Baron, Consuelo!

CONSUELO (*thinking*): And what is—death?

HE: I do not know, my Queen. Nobody knows. Like love! Nobody knows. But your little hands will become cold, and your dear little eyes will be closed. You will be away from here. And the music will play without you, and without you the crazy Bezano will be galloping, and Tilly and Polly will be playing on their pipes without you: tilly-polly, tilly-polly . . . tilly-tilly, polly-polly . . .

CONSUELO: Please don't, HE darling—I am so sad, anyway . . . tilly-tilly, polly-polly . . . (*Silence. HE looks at Consuelo.*)

HE: You were crying, my little Consuelo?

CONSUELO: Yes, a little. Alfred made me nervous. But tell me, is it my fault that I can't do anything to-day? I tried to, but I couldn't.

HE: Why?

CONSUELO: Ah, I don't know. There is something here. (*Presses her hand against her heart.*) I don't know. HE, I must be sick. What is sickness? Does it hurt very much?

HE: It is not sickness. It is the charm of the far off stars, Consuelo. It is the voice of your fate, my little Queen.

CONSUELO: Don't talk nonsense, please. What should the stars care about me? I am so small. Nonsense, HE! Tell me rather another tale which you know: about the blue sea and those gods, you know . . . who are so beautiful. Did they all die?

HE: They are all alive, but they hide themselves, my goddess.

CONSUELO: In the woods or mountains? Can one come across them? Ah, imagine HE . . . I come across a god, and he suddenly takes a look at me! I'd run away. (*Laughs.*) This morning when I went without breakfast, I became so sad, so disgusted, and I thought: if a god should come, and give me something to eat! And as I thought it, I suddenly heard, honestly it's true, I heard: "Consuelo, somebody's calling you." (*Angrily.*) Don't you dare laugh!

HE: Am I laughing?

CONSUELO: Honestly, it's true. Ah, HE, but he didn't come. He only called me and disappeared, and how can you find him? It hurt me so much, and hurts even now. Why did you remind me of my childhood? I'd forgotten it entirely. There was the sea . . . and something . . . many, many . . . (*Closes her eyes, smiling.*)

HE: Remember, Consuelo!

CONSUELO: No. (*Opening her eyes*) I forget everything about it. (*Looks around the room.*) HE, do you see what a poster they made for my benefit performance? It's Father's idea. The Baron liked it. (*HE laughs. Silence.*)

HE (*slowly*): Consuelo, my Queen! Don't go to the Baron to-day.

CONSUELO: Why? (*After a silence.*) How fresh you are, HE.

HE (*lowering his head, slowly*): I don't want it.

CONSUELO (*getting up*): What? You don't want it?

HE (*bowing his head still lower*): I do not want you to marry the Baron. (*Imploring.*) I . . . I shall not allow it . . . I beg you!

CONSUELO: Whom, then, would you ask me to marry? You, perhaps, you fool? (*With a rancorous laugh*) Are you crazy, my darling? "I shall not allow." HE! He will not allow me! But it is unbearable! What business is it of yours? (*Walking up and down the room, looks over her shoulder at HE, with anger*.) Some fool clown, whom they can kick out of here any minute. You make me sick with your stupid tales. Or you like slaps so much. Fool, you couldn't invent anything better than a slap!

HE (*without lifting his head*): Forgive me, my Queen.

CONSUELO: He is glad when they laugh at him. Some god! No, I shan't forgive. I know you. (*Makes same gesture as Mancini*.) You have something there! Laughs . . . so nicely . . . plays, plays, and then suddenly—hop! *Obey him!* No, darling, I am not that kind! Carry my train, that is your business—fool!

HE: I shall carry your train, my Queen. Forgive me. Give me back the image of my beautiful, piteous goddess.

CONSUELO (*quieting down*): You're playing again?

HE: I am.

CONSUELO (*laughing*): You see! (*Sits down*.) Foolish HE.

HE: I see everything, my Queen. I see how beautiful you are, and how low under your feet your poor court fool is lying. Somewhere in the abyss his little bells are ringing. He kneels before you and prays; forgive and pity him, my divine one. He was too impudent; he played so cheerfully that he went too far and lost his tiny little mind, the last bit of understanding he had saved up. Forgive me!

CONSUELO: All right. I forgive you. (*Laughs*.) And now will you allow me to marry the Baron?

HE (*also laughing*): And nevertheless I will not allow it. But what does a queen care about the permission of her enamoured fool?

CONSUELO: Get up. You are forgiven. And do you know why? You think because of your words? You are a cunning beast, HE! No, because of the sandwiches. That's why. You were so lovely, you panted so when you brought them. Poor darling HE. From to-morrow you may be at my feet again. And as soon as I whistle, "tuwhooo"—

HE: I shall instantly lie down at thy feet, Consuelo. It is settled! But all my little bells fell off to-day and—

(*Bezano appears, confused*.)

CONSUELO: Alfred! You came for me?

BEZANO: Yes. Will you work some more, Consuelo?

CONSUELO: Certainly. As much as you want. But I thought, Alfred, you were mad at me? I shan't dawdle any more.

BEZANO: No. You didn't dawdle. Don't be offended, because I yelled so much. You know when one has to teach, and—

CONSUELO: My goodness, do you think I don't understand? You are too nice, unbearably nice, to like teaching such a fool as me. Do you think I don't understand? Come on!

BEZANO: Come on! Hello, HE! I haven't seen you yet to-day. How are you?

HE: How are you, Bezano? Wait, wait a minute—stay here a minute, both of you—that way. Yes!

(Consuelo and Bezano stand side by side, the jockey scowling, Consuelo laughing and flushing.)

CONSUELO: Like Adam and Eve? How foolish you are! Terribly. *(She runs away.)* I shall only change my slippers, Alfred.

HE: Consuelo! And how about Father and the Baron? They will come soon, to take you with them.

CONSUELO: Let them come. They can wait. Not very important people.

(Runs away. Bezano hesitatingly follows her.)

HE: Stay here for a while, Bezano. Sit down.

BEZANO: What more do you want? I have no time for your nonsense.

HE: You can remain standing if you want to. Bezano—you love her? *(Silence.)*

BEZANO: I shall allow nobody to interfere with my affairs. You allow yourself too many liberties, HE. I don't know you. You came from the street, and why should I trust you?

HE: But you know the Baron? Listen. It is painful for me to pronounce these words: she loves you. Save her from the spider! Or are you blind, and don't see the web, which is woven in every dark corner. Get out of the vicious circle in which you are turning around, like a blind man. Take her away, steal her, do what you want . . . kill her even, and take her to the heavens or to the devil! But don't give her to this man! He is a defiler of love. And if you are timid, if you are afraid to lift your hand against her—kill the Baron! Kill!

BEZANO *(with a smile)*: And who will kill the others, to come?

HE: She loves you.

BEZANO: Did she tell you that herself?

HE: What a petty, what a stupid, what a human pride! But you are a little god! A god, youth! Why don't you want to believe me? Or does the street, from which I have come, bother you? But look, look yourself. Look in my eyes, do such eyes lie? Yes, my face is ugly, I make faces and grimaces, I am surrounded by laughter, but don't you see the god behind all this, a god, like you? Look, look at me! *(Bezano bursts out laughing.)* What are you laughing at, youth?

BEZANO: You look now as you did that evening in the ring. You remember? When you were a great man, and they sent for you from the Academy, and suddenly—Hup! HE Who Gets Slapped!

HE *(laughing the same way)*: Yes, yes, you are right, Bezano. There is a resemblance. *(With a strained expression, taking a pose)* "It seems to me they sent for me from the Academy!"

BEZANO *(displeased)*: But I don't like this play. You can present your face for slaps if you want to, but don't dare to expose mine. *(Turns to go.)*

HE: Bezano!

BEZANO *(turning round)*: And never let me hear any more about Consuelo, and don't dare to tell me again that I am a god! It is disgusting.

(Bezano goes out angrily, striking his boot with his whip. HE is alone. Wrathfully, with a tortured expression, he makes a step towards the jockey, then stops, with soundless laughter, his head thrown backwards. The Baron and Mancini find him in this position, when they enter.

MANCINI (*laughing*): What a cheerful chap you are, HE! You laugh when you are alone. (*HE laughs aloud.*) Stop it fool! How can you stand it?

HE (*bowing low, with a large gesture*): How do you do, Baron? My humblest respects to you, Count. I beg your pardon, Count, but you found the clown at work. These are, so to speak, Baron, his everyday pleasures.

MANCINI (*lifting his eyebrows*): Tsss. But you are a clever man, HE. I shall ask Papa Briquet to give you a benefit performance. Shall I, HE?

HE: Please do me the favour, Count.

MANCINI: Don't overdo. Be more simple, HE. (*Laughs.*) But how many slaps will you get at your benefit performance, when even on weekdays they ring you like a gong! A funny profession, isn't it, Baron?

BARON: Very strange. But where is the Countess?

MANCINI: Yes, yes. I shall go for her at once. Dear child, she is so absorbed in her benefit performance and her work. They call this *jumping work*, Baron.

BARON: I can wait a little. (*Sits down, with his silk hat on his head.*)

MANCINI: But why? I shall hurry her up. I shall be back at once. And you, HE, be a nice host, and entertain our dear guest. You will not be bored in his company, Baron.

(*He goes out. HE strides about the stage, smiling and glancing from time to time at the Baron. The latter sits with his legs spread apart and his chin on the top of his cane. The silk hat remains on his head. He is silent.*)

HE: In what way would you like me to entertain you, Baron?

BARON: In no way! I don't like clowns.

HE: Nor I Barons.

(*Silence. HE puts on his derby hat, takes a chair with a large gesture, and puts it down heavily, in front of the Baron. He sits astride it, imitating the pose of the Baron, and looks him in the eyes. Silence.*)

HE: Can you be silent very long?

BARON: Very long.

HE (*taps on the floor with his foot*): And can you wait very long?

BARON: Very long.

HE: Until you get it?

BARON: Until I get it. And you?

HE: I too.

(*Both look at each other, silently, their heads close together. From the ring one hears the strains of the Tango.*)

CURTAIN

ACT IV

Music in the ring. More disorder in the room than usual. All kinds of actors' costumes hanging on pegs and lying in the corners. On the table a bouquet of fiery-red roses, put there by some careless hand. At the entrance, near the arch, three bareback riders are smoking and chattering; they are all minor actors. All part their hair the same way; two wear small moustaches; the third one is clean-shaven with a face like a bull-dog.

THE CLEAN-SHAVEN ONE: Go on, Henry! Ten thousand francs! It's too much even for the Baron.

THE SECOND: How much are roses now?

THE SHAVEN: I don't know. In winter they are certainly more expensive, but still Henry talks nonsense. Ten thousand!

THE SECOND: The Baron has his own hothouse. They don't cost him anything.

HENRY (*throwing away his cigar, which has burned the tips of his fingers*): No, Grab, you're silly. There's a whole car-load full! One can smell the roses a mile away. They're to cover the entire arena.

THE SHAVEN: Only the ring.

HENRY: It's all the same. In order to cover the ring, you must have thousands and thousands of roses. You'll see what it looks like, when they've covered everything like a carpet. He ordered them to make it like a carpet! Do you see, Grab?

THE SECOND: What a Baron's craze! Isn't it time yet?

HENRY: No, we have time enough. I rather like it: a fiery-red tango on a fiery-red cover of winter roses!

THE SHAVEN: Consuelo will be galloping on roses. And Bezano?

THE SECOND: And Bezano on thorns. (*Smiles.*)

THE SHAVEN: That youngster has no self-respect. I'd have refused.

HENRY: But it is his job. He's got to do it. (*Laughs.*) Talk to him about self-respect! He's as angry and proud as a little Satan.

THE SECOND: No, you may say what you like, it's an excellent benefit performance. It's a joy to look at the crowd. They're so excited.

HENRY: Tsss! (*All throw away their cigars and cigarettes, like school boys who are caught, and make way for Zinida, who enters with HE.*)

ZINIDA: What are you doing here, gentlemen? Your place is at the entrance.

HENRY (*with a respectful smile*): We are here just for a minute, Madame Zinida. We are going. What a successful evening! And what a glory for Papa Briquet!

ZINIDA: Yes. Go, and please don't leave your places. (*They go. Zinida pulls a drawer out of the desk, and puts in some papers. She is in her lion tamer's costume.*) HE, what were you doing near my lions? You frightened me.

HE: Why, Duchess, I merely wanted to hear what the beasts were saying about the benefit performance. They are pacing in their cages, and growling.

ZINIDA: The music makes them nervous. Sit down, HE. An excellent evening, and I am so glad that Consuelo is leaving us. Have you heard about the Baron's roses?

HE: Everybody is talking about them. The Hymeneal roses!

ZINIDA: Here are some, too. (*Pushes away the bouquet.*) You find them everywhere. Yes, I am glad. She is superfluous here, and disturbs our work. It is a misfortune for a cast to have in it such a beautiful and such an . . . accessible girl.

HE: But it is an honest marriage, Duchess, is it not?

ZINIDA: I don't care what it is.

HE: Spiders, too, need an improvement in their breed! Can't you imagine, Zinida, what charming little spiders this couple will create! They will have the face of their mother, Consuelo, and the stomach of their father, the Baron, and thus could be an ornament for any circus-ring.

ZINIDA: You are malicious to-day, HE. You are morose.

HE: I laugh.

ZINIDA: You do, but without joy. Why are you without make-up?

HE: I am in the third act. I have time. And how does Bezano feel about this evening. Is he glad?

ZINIDA: I didn't talk to Bezano. You know what I think, my friend? You, too, are superfluous here. (*Silence.*)

HE: How do you want me to take that, Zinida?

ZINIDA: Just as I said. In fact, Consuelo sold herself for nothing. What is the Baron worth, with his poor millions? People say that you are clever, too clever perhaps; tell me then, for how much could one buy me?

HE (*looking as if he were pricing her*): Only for a crown.

ZINIDA: A baron's crown?

HE: No, a royal one.

ZINIDA: You are far from being stupid. And you guessed that Consuelo is not Mancini's daughter?

HE (*startled*): What! And she knows it?

ZINIDA: Hardly. And why should she know it? Yes, she is a girl from Corsica whose parents are unknown. He preferred to use her for business rather than . . . But according to the law, she is his daughter, Countess Veronica Mancini.

HE: It is nice, to have everything done according to law, isn't it, Zinida? But it is curious there is more blue blood in her than in this Mancini. One would say that it was she who found him on the street, and made him a count and her father. Count Mancini! (*Laughs.*)

ZINIDA: Yes, you are gloomy, HE. I changed my mind, you'd better stay here.

HE: Will I not be superfluous?

ZINIDA: When she is gone, you will not. Oh! You don't know yet, how nice it is to be with us. What a rest for the body and mind. I understand you. I am clever, too. Like you, I brought with me from out there my inclination for chains, and for a long time I chained myself to whatever I could, in order to feel firm.

HE: Bezano?

ZINIDA: Bezano and others; there were many, there will be many more. My red lion, with whom I am desperately in love, is still more terrible

than Bezano. But it is all nonsense; old habits, which we are sorry to let go, like old servants who steal things. Leave Consuelo alone. She has her own way.

HE: Automobiles and diamonds?

ZINIDA: When did you see a beauty clad in simple cotton? If this one does not buy her, another will. They buy off everything that is beautiful. Yes, I know. For the first ten years she will be a sad beauty, who will attract the eyes of the poor man on the side-walk; afterward she will begin to paint a little around her eyes and smile, and then will take—

HE: Her *chauffeur* or butler as a lover? You're not guessing badly, Zinida!

ZINIDA: Am I not right? I don't want to intrude on your confidence, but to-day I am sorry for you, HE. What can you do against Fate? Don't be offended, my friend, by the words of a woman. I like you; you are not beautiful, nor young, nor rich, and your place is—

HE: On the side-walk, from which one looks at the beauties. (Laughs.) And if I don't want to?

ZINIDA: What does it matter, your "want" or "don't want"? I am sorry for you, my poor friend, but if you are a strong man, and I think you are, then there is only one way for you. To forget.

HE: You think that that's being strong? And you are saying this, you, Queen Zinida, who want to awaken the feeling of love, even in the heart of a lion? For one second of an illusory possession, you are ready to pay with your life, and still you advise me to forget! Give me your strong hand, my beautiful lady; see how much strength there is in this pressure, and don't pity me.

(Enter Briquet and Mancini. The latter is reserved, and self-consciously imposing. He has a new suit, but the same cane, and the same noiseless smile of a satyr.)

ZINIDA (whispering): Will you stay?

HE: Yes. I shan't go away.

MANCINI: How are you, my dear? But you are dazzling, my dear! I swear you are marvellous! Your lion would be an ass, if he did not kiss your hand, as I do. . . . (Kisses her hand.)

ZINIDA: May I congratulate you, Count?

MANCINI: Yes, *merci*. (To HE) How are you, my dear?

HE: Good evening, Count!

BRIQUET: Zinida, the Count wants to pay immediately for the breach of contract with Consuelo . . . the Countess's contract. Don't you remember, Mother, how much it is?

ZINIDA: I'll look it up, Papa.

MANCINI: Yes, please. Consuelo will not return here any more. We leave to-morrow.

(Zinida and Briquet search among the papers. HE takes Mancini roughly by the elbow, and draws him aside.)

HE (in a low voice): How are your girls, Mancini?

MANCINI: What girls? What is this, stupidity or blackmail? Look out, sir, be careful, the policeman is not far.

HE: You are much too severe, Mancini. I assumed, that since we are *tête-à-tête* . . .

MANCINI: But tell me, what kind of *tête-à-tête* is possible, between a clown and me? (Laughs.) You are stupid, HE. You should say what you want, and not ask questions!

BRIQUET: Three thousand francs, Count.

MANCINI: Is that all? For Consuelo? All right. I will inform the Baron.

ZINIDA: You took—

BRIQUET: Don't, Mother, don't.

ZINIDA: Count, you drew in advance, I have it written down, eighty francs and twenty centimes. Will you pay this money, too?

MANCINI: Certainly, certainly. You will get three thousand and one hundred. (Laughing) Twenty centimes! I never thought I could be so accurate! (Seriously) Yes, my friends. My daughter Consuelo—the Countess—and the Baron, expressed their desire to bid farewell to the whole cast.

HE: The Baron, too?

MANCINI: Yes, Auguste, too. They want to do it during the intermission. Therefore, I ask you to gather here . . . the more decent ones . . . but please don't make it too crowded! HE, will you, sir, be kind enough to run into the buffet and tell them to bring right away a basket of champagne, bottles and glasses—you understand?

HE: Yes, Count.

MANCINI: Wait a minute, what's the hurry—what is this, a new costume? You are all burning like the devils in hell!

HE: You do me too much honour, Count, I am not a devil. I am merely a poor sinner whom the devils are frying a little. (He goes out, bowing like a clown.)

MANCINI: A gifted chap, but too cunning.

BRIQUET: It's the Tango colour, in honour of your daughter, Count. He needs it for a new stunt, which he doesn't want to tell in advance. Don't you want to sit down, Count?

MANCINI: Auguste is waiting for me, but . . . it's all right. (Takes a seat.) Nevertheless I am sorry to leave you, my friend. High society, certainly, prerogatives of the title, castles of exalted noblemen, but where could I find such freedom, and . . . such simplicity. . . . And besides, these announcements, these burning posters, which take your breath in the morning, they had something which summoned, which encouraged. . . . There, my friends, I shall become old.

BRIQUET: But pleasures of a higher kind, Count. Why are you silent, Zinida?

ZINIDA: I'm listening.

MANCINI: By the way, my dear, how do you like my suit? You have wonderful taste. (Spreads out his lace tie and lace cuffs.)

ZINIDA: I like it. You look like a nobleman of the courts of long ago.

MANCINI: Yes? But don't you think it is too conspicuous? Who wears lace and satin now? This dirty democracy will soon make us dress ourselves in sack cloth. (With a sigh) Auguste told me that this jabot was out of place.

ZINIDA: The Baron is too severe.

MANCINI: Yes, but it seems to me he is right. I am a little infected with

your fancy. (HE returns. Two waiters follow him, carrying a basket of champagne and glasses. They prepare everything on the table.)

MANCINI: Ah! merci, HE. But please, none of this bourgeois exploding of corks; be slower and more modest. Send the bill to Baron Regnard. Then, we will be here, Briquet. I must go.

ZINIDA (looks at her watch): Yes, the act is going to end soon.

MANCINI: Heavens! (Disappears in a hurry.)

BRIQUET: The devil take him!

ZINIDA (pointing to the waiter): Not so loud, Louis!

BRIQUET: No! The devil take him! And why couldn't you help me, Mother? You left me alone to talk to him. High Society! High pleasures! Swindler. (HE and Zinida laugh. The waiters smile.)

BRIQUET (to the waiters): What are you laughing about? You can go. We will help ourselves. Whiskey and soda, Jean! (In a low and angry voice) Champagne!

(Enter Jackson, in his clown's costume.)

JACKSON: A whiskey and soda for me, too! At least I hear some laughter here. Those idiots have simply forgotten how to laugh. My sun was rising and setting and crawling all over the ring—and not a smile! Look at my bottom, shines like a mirror! (Turns around quickly.) Beg your pardon, Zinida. And you don't look badly to-night, HE. Look out for your cheeks. I hate beauties.

BRIQUET: A benefit performance crowd!

JACKSON (looking in a hand mirror, correcting his make-up): In the orchestra there are some Barons and Egyptian mummies. I got a belly-ache from fright. I am an honest clown. I can't stand it when they look at me as if I had stolen a handkerchief. HE, please give them a good many slaps to-night.

HE: Be quiet, Jim. I shall avenge you. (He goes out.)

ZINIDA: And how is Bezano?

JACKSON (grumbling): Bezano! A crazy success. But he is crazy, he will break his neck to-morrow. Why does he run such a risk? Or perhaps he has wings, like a god? Devil take it. It's disgusting to look at him. It's not work any more.

BRIQUET: You are right, Jim! It is not work any more. To your health, old comrade, Jackson.

JACKSON: To yours, Louis.

BRIQUET: It is not work any more, since these Barons came here! Do you hear? They are laughing. But I am indignant, I am indignant, Jim! What do they want here, these Barons? Let them steal hens in other hen roosts, and leave us in peace. Ah! Had I been Secretary of the Interior, I should have made an iron fence between us and those people.

JACKSON: I am very sorry myself for our dear little Consuelo. I don't know why, but it seems to me that we all look to-day more like swindlers than honest artists. Don't you think so, Zinida?

ZINIDA: Everybody does what he wants. It's Consuelo's business and her father's.

BRIQUET: No, Mother, that's not true! Not everybody does what he wants, but it turns out this way . . . devil knows why.

(Enter Angelica and Thomas, an athlete.)

ANGELICA: Is this where we're going to have champagne?

BRIQUET: And you're glad already?

THOMAS: There it is! Oh, oh, what a lot!

ANGELICA: The Count told me to come here. I met him.

BRIQUET (*angrily*): All right, if he said so, but there is no reason to enjoy it. Look out, Angelica, you will have a bad end. I see you through and through. How does she work, Thomas?

THOMAS: Very well.

ANGELICA (*in a low voice*): How angry Papa Briquet is to-night.

(Enter HE, Tilly, Polly, and other actors, all in their costumes.)

TILLY: Do you really want champagne?

POLLY: I don't want it at all. Do you, Tilly?

TILLY: And I don't want it. HE, did you see how the Count walks?

(Walks, imitating Mancini. Laughter.)

POLLY: Let me be the Baron. Take my arm. Look out, ass, you stepped on my beloved family tree!

ANGELICA: It'll soon be finished. Consuelo is galloping now. It is her waltz. What a success she is having!

(All listen to the waltz. Tilly and Polly are singing it softly.)

ANGELICA: She is so beautiful! Are those her flowers?

(They listen. Suddenly, a crash as if a broken wall were tumbling down: applause, shouting, screaming; much motion on the stage. The actors are pouring champagne. New ones come in, talking and laughing. When they notice the director and the champagne, they become quiet and modest.)

VOICES: They're coming! What a success! I should say, since all the orchestra seats . . . And what will it be when they see the Tango? Don't be envious, Alphonse.

BRIQUET: Silence! Not so much noise, please! Zinida, look here, don't be so quiet! High society!

(Enter Consuelo, on the arm of the Baron who is stiff and erect. She is happy. Mancini, serious and happy. Behind them, riders, actors, actresses. The Baron has in his button-hole a fiery-red rose. All applaud and cry: "Bravo, bravo!")

CONSUELO: Friends . . . my dears . . . Father, I can't. . . . (Throws herself into Mancini's arms, and hides her face on his shoulders. Mancini looks with a smile over her head at the Baron. Baron smiles slightly, but remains earnest and motionless. A new burst of applause.)

BRIQUET: Enough, children! Enough!

MANCINI: Calm yourself, calm yourself, my child. How they all love you! (Taking a step forward) Ladies and gentlemen, Baron Regnard did me the honour yesterday, to ask for the hand of my daughter, the Countess Veronica, whom you knew under the name of Consuelo. Please take your glasses.

CONSUELO: No, I am still Consuelo, to-night, and I shall always be Consuelo! Zinida, dear! (Falls on the neck of Zinida. Fresh applause.)

BRIQUET: Stop it! Silence! Take your glasses. What are you standing here for? If you came, then take the glasses.

TILLY (*trembling*): They are frightened. You take yours first, Papa, and we will follow.

(They take the glasses. Consuelo is near the Baron, holding the sleeve of his dress coat with her left hand. In her right hand, she has a glass of champagne, which spills over.)

BARON: You are spilling your wine, Consuelo.

CONSUELO: Ah! It is nothing! I am frightened, too. Are you, Father?

MANCINI: Silly child. (An awkward silence.)

BRIQUET (with a step forward): Countess! As the director of the circus, who was happy enough . . . to witness . . . many times . . . your successes . . .

CONSUELO: I do not like this, Papa Briquet! I am Consuelo. What do you want to do with me? I shall cry. I don't want this "Countess." Give me a kiss, Briquet!

BRIQUET: Ah, Consuelo! Books have killed you.

(Kisses her with tears. Laughter, applause. The clowns cluck like hens, bark, and express their emotions in many other ways. The motley crowd of clowns, which is ready for the pantomime, becomes more and more lively. The Baron is motionless, there is a wide space around him; the people touch glasses with him in a hurry, and go off to one side. With Consuelo they clink willingly and cheerfully. She kisses the women.)

JACKSON: Silence! Consuelo, from to-day on, I extinguish my sun. Let the dark night come after you leave us. You were a nice comrade and worker, we all loved you and will love the traces of your little feet on the sand. Nothing remains to us!

CONSUELO: You are so good, so good, Jim. So good that there is no one better. And your sun is better than all the other suns. I laughed so much at it. Alfred, dear, why don't you come? I was looking for you.

BEZANO: My congratulations, Countess.

CONSUELO: Alfred, I am Consuelo!

BEZANO: When you are on horseback; but here—I congratulate you, Countess. (He passes, only slightly touching Consuelo's glass. Consuelo still holds it. Mancini looks at the Baron with a smile. The latter is motionless.)

BRIQUET: Nonsense, Bezano. You are making Consuelo unhappy. She is a good comrade.

CONSUELO: No, it's all right.

ANGELICA: You'll dance the Tango with her to-night, so how is she a countess?

TILLY: May I clink glasses with you, Consuelo? You know Polly has died of grief already, and I am going to die. I have such a weak stomach.

(Laughter; Baron shows slight displeasure. General motion.)

MANCINI: Enough, enough! The intermission is over.

CONSUELO: Already? It's so nice here.

BRIQUET: I shall prolong it. They can wait. Tell them, Thomas.

MANCINI: Auguste, the musicians of the orchestra, too, ask permission to congratulate you and Consuelo. Do you . . . ?

BARON: Certainly, certainly.

(Enter crowd of musicians. The conductor, an old Italian, lifts his glass solemnly and without looking at the Baron.)

THE CONDUCTOR: Consuelo! They call you Countess here, but for me you were and are *Consuelo*.

CONSUELO: Certainly!

CONDUCTOR: Consuelo! My violins and bassoons, my trumpets and drums, all are drinking your health. Be happy, dear child, as you were happy here. And we shall conserve for ever in our hearts the fair memory of our light-winged fairy, who guided our bows so long. I have finished! Give my love to our beautiful Italy, Consuelo.

(*Applause, compliments. The musicians one after another clink glasses and go out into the corridor. Consuelo is almost crying.*)

MANCINI: Don't be so sensitive, my child, it is indecent. Had I known that you would respond this way to this comedy—Auguste, look how touched this little heart is!

BARON: Calm yourself, Consuelo.

CONSUELO: It is all right. Ah, Father, listen!

. (The musicians are playing the *Tango* in the corridor. *Exclamations.*)

MANCINI: You see. It is for you.

CONSUELO: They are so nice. My *Tango*! I want to dance. Who is going to dance with me? (Looks around, seeking *Bezano*, who turns away sadly.) Who, then?

VOICES: Baron! Let the Baron dance! Baron!

BARON: All right. (Takes *Consuelo's* arm, and stands in the centre of a circle which is formed.) I do not know how to dance the *Tango*, but I shall hold tight. Dance, *Consuelo*. (He stands with legs spread, heavily and awkwardly, like an iron-moulded man, holding *Consuelo's* arm firmly and seriously.)

MANCINI (applauding): Bravo! Bravo! (Consuelo makes a few restless movements, and pulls her arm away.)

CONSUELO: No, I can't this way. How stupid! Let me go! (She goes to *Zinida* and embraces her, as if hiding herself. The music still plays. The Baron goes off quietly to the side. There is an unfriendly silence among the cast. They shrug their shoulders.)

MANCINI (alone): Bravo! Bravo! It is charming, it is exquisite!

JACKSON: Not entirely, Count.

(*Tilly and Polly imitate the Baron and Consuelo without moving from their places.*)

TILLY (shrieking): Let me go!

POLLY: No, I'll not. Dance!

(The music stops abruptly. General, too loud laughter; the clowns bark and roar. *Papa Briquet* gesticulates, in order to re-establish silence. The Baron is apparently as indifferent as before.)

MANCINI: Really these vagabonds are becoming too impudent. (Shrugging his shoulders) It smells of the stable. You cannot help it, *Auguste*!

BARON: Don't be upset, Count.

HE (holding his glass, approaches the Baron): Baron! Will you permit me to make a toast?

BARON: Make it.

HE: To your dance! (Slight laughter in the crowd.)

BARON: I don't dance!

HE: Then another one, Baron. Let us drink to those who know how to wait longer, until they get it.

BARON: I do not accept any toasts which I do not understand. Say it more simply.

(Voice of a woman: "Bravo, HE!" Slight laughter. Mancini says something hastily to Briquet; the latter spreads his arms in gesture of helplessness. Jackson takes HE by the arm.)

JACKSON: Beat it, HE! The Baron doesn't like jokes.

HE: But I want to drink with the Baron. What can be simpler? Simpler? Baron, let us drink to the very small distance which will always remain 'twixt the cup and the lip! (Spills his wine, and laughs.)

(The Baron turns his back on him, indifferently. The music plays in the ring. The bell rings.)

BRIQUET (relieved): There! To the ring, ladies and gentlemen, to the ring, to the ring!

(The actresses run out. The crowd becomes smaller; laughter and voices.)

MANCINI (much excited, whispers to the Baron): "Auguste, Auguste—"

BRIQUET (to Zinida): Thank heaven they're beginning. Ah, Mother, I asked you . . . but you want a scandal by all means, and you always—

ZINIDA: Let me alone, Louis.

(HE approaches Consuelo, who is alone.)

CONSUELO: HE, deary, how are you? I thought you didn't want even to come near me. (In a low voice) Did you notice Bezano?

HE: I was waiting for my turn, Queen. It was so difficult to get through the crowd to approach you.

CONSUELO: Through the crowd? (With a sad smile) I am quite alone. What do you want, Father?

MANCINI: Child! Auguste . . .

CONSUELO (pulling away her hand): Let me alone! I'll soon be— Come here, HE. What did you say to him? They all laughed. I couldn't understand. What?

HE: I joked, Consuelo.

CONSUELO: Please don't, HE, don't make him angry; he is so terrible. Did you see how he pressed my arm? I wanted to scream. (With tears in her eyes) He hurt me!

HE: It's not too late yet. Refuse him.

CONSUELO: It is too late, HE. Don't talk about it.

HE: Do you want it? I will take you away from here.

CONSUELO: Where to? (Laughs.) Ah, my dear little silly boy, where could you take me to. All right, be quiet. How pale you are! You too, love me? Don't HE, please don't! Why do they all love me?

HE: You are so beautiful!

CONSUELO: No, no. It's not true. They must not love me. I was still a little cheerful, but when they began to speak . . . so nicely . . . and about Italy . . . and to bid farewell, as if I were dying, I thought I should begin to cry. Don't talk, don't talk, but drink to . . . my happiness. (With a sad smile) To my happiness, HE. What are you doing?

HE: I am throwing away the glass from which you drank with the others.

I shall give you another one. Wait a minute. (*Goes to pour champagne. Consuelo walks about thoughtfully. Almost all are gone. Only the principal figures are left.*)

MANCINI (*coming to her*): But it is really becoming indecent, Veronica. Auguste is so nice, he is waiting for you, and you talk here with this clown. Some stupid secrets. They're looking at you—it is becoming noticeable. It is high time, Veronica, to get rid of these habits.

CONSUELO (*loudly*): Let me alone, Father! I want to do so, and will do so. They are all my friends. Do you hear? Let me alone!

BARON: Don't, Count. Please, Consuelo, talk to whomever you please and as much as you want. Would you like a cigar, Count? Dear Briquet, please order them to prolong the intermission a little more.

BRIQUET: With pleasure, Baron. The orchestra crowd can be a little angry. (*Goes, and returns shortly. HE gives a glass to Consuelo.*)

HE: Here is your glass. To your happiness, to your freedom, Consuelo!

CONSUELO: And where is yours? We must touch our glasses.

HE: You leave half.

CONSUELO: Must I drink so much? HE, deary, I shall become drunk. I still have to ride.

HE: No, you will not be drunk. Dear little girl, did you forget that I am your magician? Be quiet and drink. I charmed the wine. My witchery is in it. Drink, goddess.

CONSUELO (*lingering*): What kind eyes you have. But why are you so pale?

HE: Because I love you. Look at my kind eyes and drink; give yourself up to my charms, goddess! You shall fall asleep, and wake again, as before. Do you remember? And you shall see your country, your sky. . . .

CONSUELO (*bringing the glass to her lips*): I shall see all this; is that true?

HE (*growing paler*): Yes! Awake, goddess, and remember the time when, covered with snow-white sea-foam, thou didst emerge from the sky blue waters. Remember heaven, and the low eastern wind, and the whisper of the foam at thy marble feet. . . .

CONSUELO (*drinking*): There! Look! Just a half! Take it. But what is the matter with you? Are you laughing or crying?

HE: I am laughing and crying.

MANCINI (*pushing HE away, slightly*): Enough, Countess, my patience is exhausted. If Auguste is good enough to allow it, then I, your Father—Your arm, Countess! Will you step aside, sir?

CONSUELO: I am tired.

MANCINI: You are not too tired to chatter and drink wine with a clown, and when your duty calls you—Briquet! Tell them to ring the bell. It is time.

CONSUELO: I am tired, Father.

ZINIDA: Count, it is cruel. Don't you see how pale she has become?

BARON: What is the matter with you, dear little Consuelo?

CONSUELO: Nothing.

ZINIDA: She simply needs a rest, Baron. She hasn't sat down yet . . . and so much excitement. . . . Sit down here, dear child. Cover yourself and rest a little. Men are so cruel!

CONSUELO: I still have to work. (Closing her eyes.) And the roses, are they ready?

ZINIDA: Ready, dear, ready. You will have such an extraordinary carpet. You will gallop as if on air. Rest.

POLLY: Do you want some moosic? We will play you a song; do you want it?

CONSUELO (smiling, eyes closed): Yes, I do.

(The clowns play a soft and naïve song: *tilly-polly, tilly-polly*. General silence. HE sits in the corner with his face turned away. JACKSON watches him out of the corner of his eye, and drinks wine, lazily. The Baron, in his usual pose, wide and heavily spread legs, looks at the pale face of Consuelo, with his bulging motionless eyes.)

CONSUELO (with a sudden cry): Ah! Pain!

ZINIDA: What is it, Consuelo?

MANCINI: My child! Are you sick? Calm yourself.

BARON (growing pale): Wait a moment. . . . She was too much excited. . . . Consuelo!

CONSUELO (gets up, looking before her with wide-open eyes, as if she were listening to something within herself): Ah! I feel pain. Here at the heart. Father, what is it? I am afraid. What is it? My feet too . . . my feet too . . . I can't stand. . . . (Falls on divan, her eyes wide open.)

MANCINI (running about): Bring a doctor! Heavens, it is terrible! Auguste, Baron . . . It never happened to her. It is nerves, nerves. . . . Calm yourself, calm, child—

BRIQUET: Bring a doctor! (Somebody runs for a doctor.)

JACKSON (in a voice full of fear): HE, what is the matter with you?

HE: It is death, Consuelo, my little Queen. I killed you. You are dying. (He cries, loudly and bitterly. Consuelo with a scream, closes her eyes, and becomes silent and quiet. All are in terrible agitation. The Baron is motionless, and sees only Consuelo.)

MANCINI (furious): You are lying, rascal! Damned clown! What did you give her? You poisoned her! Murderer! Bring a doctor!

HE: A doctor will not help. You are dying, my little Queen. Consuelo! Consuelo!

(Bezano rushes in, cries: "Briquet!" becomes silent and looks with horror at Consuelo. Somebody else comes in. Briquet is making gestures for someone to close the door.)

CONSUELO (in a dull and distant voice): You are joking, HE? Don't frighten me. I am so frightened. Is that death? I don't want it. Ah, HE, my darling HE, tell me that you are joking, I am afraid, my dear, golden HE!

(HE pushes away the Baron, with a commanding gesture, and stands in his place near Consuelo. The Baron stands as before, seeing only Consuelo.)

HE: Yes, I am joking. Don't you hear how I laugh, Consuelo? They all laugh at you here, my silly child. Don't laugh, Jim. She is tired, and wants to sleep. How can you laugh, Jim! Sleep my dear, sleep my heart, sleep my love.

CONSUELO: Yes, I have no more pain. Why did you joke that way, and

frighten me? Now I laugh at myself. You told me, didn't you, that I . . . should . . . live . . . eternally?

HE: Yes, Consuelo! You shall live eternally. Sleep. Be calm. (*Lifts up his arms, as if straining with all his forces to lift her soul higher.*) How easy it is now! How much light, how many lights are burning about you. . . . The light is blinding you.

CONSUELO: Yes, light . . . Is that the ring?

HE: No, it is the sea and the sun . . . what a sun! Don't you feel that you are the foam, white sea-foam, and you are flying to the sun? You feel light, you have no body, you are flying higher, my love!

CONSUELO: I am flying. I am the sea-foam, and this is the sun, it shines . . . so strong. . . . I feel well.

(She dies. Silence. HE stays a moment with lifted arms, then takes a long look, lets his arms fall, and shakingly goes off to one side. He stands still for a moment, then sits down, drops his head on his hands, and struggles lonesomely with the torpidity of coming death.)

BRIQUET (slowly): She has fallen asleep, Mother?

ZINIDA (dropping the dead hand): I am afraid not. . . . Step aside, Louis. Baron, it is better for you to step aside. Baron! Do you hear me? (Weeps.) She is dead, Louis.

(The clowns and Briquet are crying. Mancini is overwhelmed. The Baron and HE are motionless, each in his place.)

JACKSON (drawing out a large prismatic clown's handkerchief to wipe away his tears): Faded, like a flower. Sleep, little Consuelo! The only thing that remains of you is the trace of your little feet on the sand. (Cries.) Ah, what did you do, what did you do, HE! . . . It would have been better if you had never come to us.

(There is music in the ring.)

BRIQUET (gesticulating): The music! Stop the music! They are crazy there. What a misfortune!

(Someone runs off. Zinida approaches the crying Bezano and strokes his bowed, pomaded head. When he notices her, he catches her hand and presses it to his eyes. The Baron takes out the rose from his button-hole, tears off the petals, and drops it, grinding it with his foot. A few pale faces peer through the door, the same masquerade crowd.)

ZINIDA (over the head of Bezano): Louis, we must call the police.

MANCINI (awakening from his stupor, screams): The police! Call the police! It's a murder! I am Count Mancini, I am Count Mancini! They will cut off your head, murderer, damned clown, thief! I myself will kill you, rascal! Ah, you! (HE lifts his heavy head with difficulty.)

HE: They will cut off my head? And what more . . . Your Excellency?

BARON: Sir! Listen, sir! I am going for the police. Stop it, sir. (HE suddenly takes a step forward, and looking HE in the eyes, speaks in a hoarse voice, with a cough, holding one hand at his throat.) I am the witness. I saw. I am a witness. I saw how he put poison . . . I—

(He leaves the room, suddenly, with the same straight, heavy steps. All move away from him, frightened. HE drops his head again. From time to time a tremor shakes his body.)

JACKSON (*clasping his hands*): Then it is all true? Poisoned! What a vile man you are, HE. Is this the way to play? Now wait for the last slap of the executioner! (*Makes the gesture around his neck, of the guillotine. Tilly and Polly repeat the gesture.*)

ZINIDA: Leave his soul alone, Jim. He was a man, and he loved. Happy Consuelo!

(*A shot is heard in the corridor. Thomas, frightened, runs in and points to his head.*)

THOMAS: Baron . . . Baron . . . his head . . . He shot himself . . .

BRIQUET (*throwing his arms up*): God! What is it? The Baron? What a calamity for our circus.

MANCINI: The Baron? The Baron? No. What are you standing here for? Ah!

BRIQUET: Calm down, Count. Who would have believed it? Such a respectable . . . gentleman!

HE (*lifting his head with difficulty; he sees only dimly with his dulled eyes*): What more? What happened?

THOMAS: The Baron shot himself. Honestly. Straight here! He's lying out yonder.

HE (*thinking it over*): Baron? (*Laughs.*) Then the Baron burst?

JACKSON: Stop it! It's shameless. A man died and you . . . What's the matter with you, HE?

HE (*stands up, lifted to his feet by the last gleam of consciousness and life, speaks strongly and indignantly*): You loved her so much, Baron? So much? My Consuelo? And you want to be ahead of me even there? No! I am coming. We shall prove then whose she is to be for ever. . . .

(*He catches at his throat, falls on his back. People run to him. General agitation.*)

CURTAIN

AN OLD MAN SEES HIMSELF

BY CONRAD AIKEN

Solitary, before daybreak, in a garden
Dark amid the unchanging snow,
Watching the last star fading in a fountain
Whence melodies of eternal water flow,

Festus, seeing the sky-line burn and brighten
Coldly, far above the hidden sun;
Seeing the golden thread of glory unravelled
Along the wall of mountains run,

Hears in his heart a cry of bewilderment;
And turning, now here, now there—
Like one who pauses a moment before departure—
Partakes of the grace of earth and air,

Drinks of the vast blue splendour of the sky,
The mile on mile of dew-blanced grass,
The cloud-swept trees, the stones, bare cliffs of bronze;
And in the pool, as in a glass,

Ringed round with nodding asters, frosted leaf-tips,
Stoops to see his image; and behold,
How faded is the scarlet of his mantle!
His face, how changed and old! . . .

Sing now the birds: on every bough a bird sings;
Slowly at first, then fast and faster,
Till the walled garden thrills and shrills with music;
The cricket beneath the violet aster

Cries his joy to heaven as the first beam strikes him—
The foxgloves bend beneath a weight of bees;
Praise! Praise! Praise! the chorus rises,
Drowsily, happily, dumbly, sway the trees.

Fades the star in the mountain, and the sun comes.
How motionless stands Festus there!
A red leaf, falling slowly to meet a red leaf
That rises out of the infinite to the air,

Floats, is turned by the wind about its image . . .
Ah Festus, is this you,
This ruin of man about whom leaves fall coldly
And asters nod their dew? . . .

Pale, phantasmal, swirls the forest of birches,
It is a dance of witch-girls white and slim;
Delicately flash their slender hands in the sunlight!
Cymbals hiss, their eyes are dim

Under the mist of hair they toss above them . . .
But Festus, turning never,
Heeding them not, nor the birds, nor the cricket shrilling,
Stares at the pool for ever,

Seeking in vain to find—somewhere, somewhere!—
In the pool, himself, the sky?—
The slight, clear, beautiful secret of these marvels,
Of birch, birds, cricket's cry,

Blue sky, blue pool, the red leaf falling and floating,
The wall of mountains, the garden, the snow,
And one old man—how sinister and bedraggled!—
Cawing there like a crow . . .

Instant the miracle is. He leans bewildered
Over the infinite, to search it through . . .
Loud sing the birds! On every bough a bird sings;
The cricket shrills, the day is blue.

OUR BEGGAR'S OPERA

BY GILBERT SELDES

IN justice to ourselves be it said that if we let *The Beggar's Opera* fail, we did not, at any rate, defile a New York theatre with a run of two thousand consecutive performances of *Chu Chin Chow*. That piece, seen in London during the second or third year of its still continuing run, revealed not one actor or actress, not one comedian or singer, not one stage setting or costume, not one ingenuity of libretto or one bar of fresh and imaginative music, surpassing the third rank of provincial eye-and-ear shows. *The Beggar's Opera* was urgently needed in London. But the revival did not ruin *Chu Chin Chow* and Mr Oscar Asche ought to be well on his way to a knighthood.

If we did not need *The Beggar's Opera* so much, we were at least as capable of profiting by it, and it is agreeable to be able to say that we have not failed to do so. Three men of our time were fit by their experience and by their intentions to learn every last line of the lesson conveyed by *The Beggar's Opera*: Mr Florenz Ziegfeld, Mr George M. Cohan, and Mr Irving Berlin. A few other well-defined talents exist. Mr Victor Herbert's happy moments amount to genius, but he is essentially a grand opera composed who has consorted too long with the librettists and has lost the sense of his own motion. Much lower in the scale are Messrs Ivan Caryll, Jerome Kern, and Louis Hirsch; I see little hope in them. Mr Deems Taylor's orchestral pieces and arrangements indicate that his work is or ought to be grand opera. Mr William Le Baron, the best of our librettists, especially when he is writing plays, seems pledged to the Viennese. It is not from that capital that our salvation is to come.

Returning to the three possible figures, Mr Ziegfeld has cultivated his garden expertly, and must be an ideal impresario; Mr Cohan has temporarily given up his revues and his masterpiece during the war must have exhausted his lyric cry, but I do not rule him out because he has a vast and versatile talent; he can do anything. In this case I do not know what he intends to do and I do know what Mr Berlin intends to do. Mr Berlin intends to write a *Beggar's Opera*.

I can understand that this statement may seem totally unimportant to some, and intolerably presumptuous to others. It happens to be my belief that Mr Berlin's is the only talent capable of immediate action in the production of American light opera; that belief is founded on his two elaborate productions, *Watch Your Step and Stop! Look! Listen!* and on certain bits in the *Ziegfeld Follies*. His talents as a song writer are, I take it, undisputed. His serious sentimental songs I detest, but his *Girl on the Magazine Cover*, with its fantastically appropriate introduction of several bars from *Lohengrin*, is by no means contemptible. He knows one thing perfectly: syncopation, and that is precisely the one thing which most other writers of syncopated music know only in part. His masterpiece, unless I have missed a recent work, is his tribute to the piano, a bewildering utilization of all the subtleties of broken time, compressed, exciting, tremendously smart. And if he knows syncopation, he is interested in other things. There are stray evidences of his being aware of other rhythms, of a few harmonies not so very recondite, of the modes of music, and of the pleasures of orchestral colour. If he assisted in these things, he is learning from his collaborators.

He has, moreover, a penchant for action. His *Ragtime Melodrama* in *Stop! Look! Listen!* has only Mr Cohan's burlesque of *Common Clay* for a rival. He writes faulty but really very amusing lyrics for his songs, and, in the case of his big shows, writes them all. When he is writing for the stage he considers every element of production: the position of a given number in the course of the act, the setting, the costumes, the dramatic value to be given to a song or a dance. His habit is to provide his producer with a set of directions as detailed as a scenario. And to his experience as librettist, composer, and producer he is adding, before this year is out, the joy of owning and running a theatre. It is from *The Music Box* that his *Beggar's Opera* will issue.

I hope that no one has read so far in the wistful hope that a magic wand will be waved and it will all turn out into a promise of a new Savoy opera. It will not. It is my earnest but despairing hope never to hear the names of Gilbert and Sullivan in connection with American operetta again. The Savoy operettas are, for one thing, in the Italian manner of operatic construction. And there is no reason under the sun why we should beat our breasts because we are not producing more of them. What we want is

operetta which will give us the same satisfactions—to the eye, to the ear, to the mind. We will never get them in an imitation. And I hope that no one still seriously believes that syncopation is necessarily vulgar or bad music; or that the American stage offers anything comparable to the girl-and-music, eye-and-ear show to please the intelligent. Our native serious drama, our problem plays, our social comedy, our melodrama, are far below the musical show in finish, in expertness, in beauty of production, in all that gives entertainment and satisfaction. At them, in the words of the immortal Queen, we are not amused. The musical shows have their faults, their Honey Girls and Magic Melodies; but, however fumblingly, they are exploiting many talents in the service of beauty, and, however slowly, are giving us keen intellectual pleasures with their aesthetic delights.

The Beggar's Opera is exactly the sort of thing our musical comedy stage has not ventured to produce. An eighteenth century wit and poet as impatient of sentimentality as is Mr Bernard Shaw, a master of parody and burlesque with a pretty ear for music—we haven't his equal, or if we have he is doing something else. I did not go to Mr Berlin to ask him if he could do what Gay had done. I asked him simply what he had got out of The Beggar's Opera. His answer was "Courage." And further:

"I always used to say that I would write a rag-time opera and people laughed at me. People think that because the words which used to go with rag-time were filthy or foolish, that they have to be that way. They don't. Take the words away and you've got something to work with. If they laugh at a rag-time opera I am willing to say that I am going to write an operetta with syncopated music, and when I do it I'll be frank and say that I used to wonder if it could be done until I saw The Beggar's Opera. If he could do what he did two hundred years ago, we can do it now."

What he did, as the professional eye saw it, was first to attack the sentimental conventions and second to attack the musical conventions. For the latter, I can well understand how any composer abominates the silly little apologetic lines which precede a musical number, as if the music weren't reasonably, essentially, part of the piece. In The Beggar's Opera the characters break into song, as simply as one hums when one is happy or cries when one is sad. That is why most of the songs have a definite relation to the text. The frankness and freedom of Gay's *use* of his musical material

was what impressed Mr Berlin; of the ballads themselves, the musical content of the songs, nothing needed to be said.

The sentimental conventions which Gay attacked were in part those of Italian opera, and he announced his purpose grimly in his introduction. That he had no recitative is not so significant for us as his precise anticipation of all those absurdities which were to survive to our time or to come into being in two centuries of musical shows. Even for Gilbert, love is at least semi-sacred. In *The Beggar's Opera* the great emotion is received with incredulous jeering and mockery. As for the happy ending, Gay reduced it to the same absurdity as Mr Cohan has so often reduced the plot, by stepping completely out of the frame of his piece, gravely consulting the proprieties, and patching up a satisfactory conclusion. The element of self-criticism, of self-burlesque, which operates often in Mr Berlin's music and in Mr Cohan's plays, was active here in perfection.

I have mentioned only a few of the qualities of *The Beggar's Opera* because they are the ones which have immediate bearing on the future of the musical show in America; they are exactly the elements chosen by Mr Berlin as instructive and provocative to himself. Mr Berlin is therefore in some measure pledged to produce a musical piece of some proportions. It will have to have an intelligent book, lyrics agreeable to the ear and appropriate to the action, and music which is dramatically apposite. I do not see any justification for insisting that it be in the form of a musical play, since an intelligent book does not necessarily mean an intelligible plot; he is not called on to write music drama. His own ambitions, I should fancy, will lead him to try a strict plot, probably burlesqued. It does not matter. What *The Beggar's Opera* has done for him is a work of liberation; it has persuaded him that he is not bound to the forms he has already tried; it has set free a singularly attractive talent and has shown an ambitious, critical, and fundamentally modest practitioner of a great art what can be done in that art when intelligence is applied to its problems.

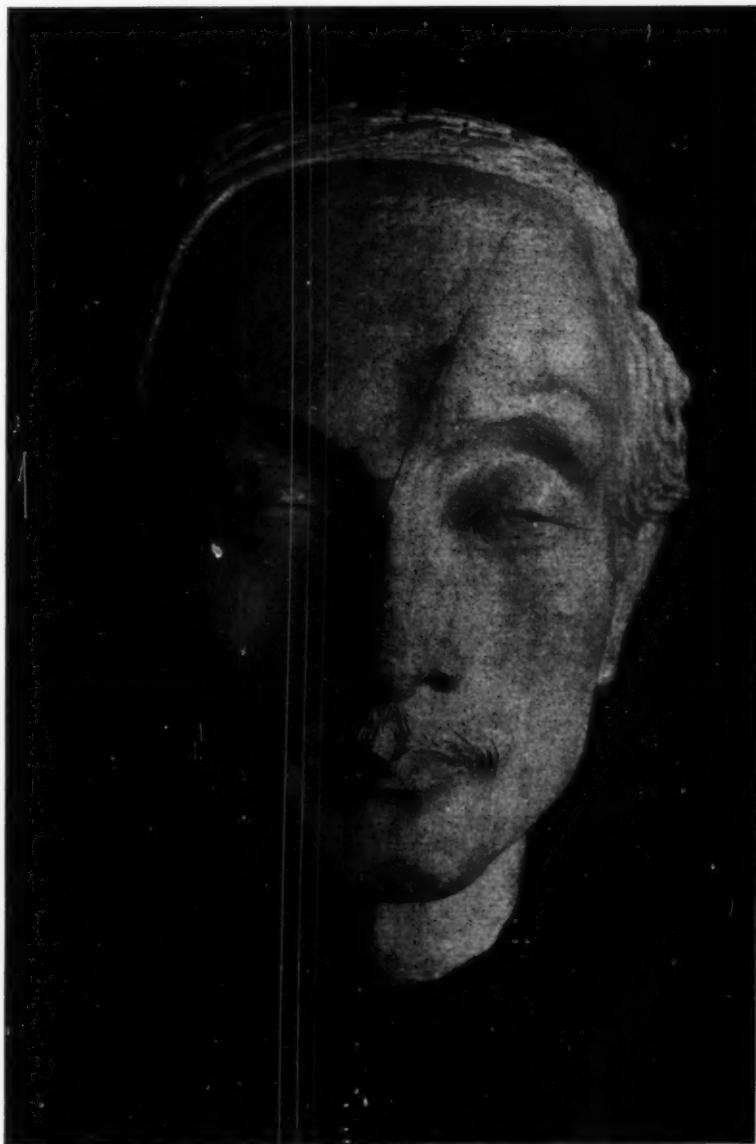
If Mr Berlin does not succeed, some one else will. The great thing is that if he does not try, it will be the better part of a generation before anyone else will be in such a favoured position to make the attempt. That is why he is important; and that is why the announcement of his intentions, which he is good enough to let me make in this way, ought to be filed for reference.

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YONE NOGUCHI. BY ALFEO FAGGI



Courtesy of the Bourgeois Galleries
PIETA. BY ALFEO FAGGI

19. 10. 1962. 100% of the plants were infested with *Thrips palmi* and *Thrips tabaci*. The plants were heavily infested with *Thrips palmi* and *Thrips tabaci*.



Courtesy of the Bourgeois Galleries
MADONNA. BY ALFEO FAGGI

UNKNOWN COUNTRY

BY HAROLD MONRO

Here, in this other world, all people go
With easy dream-like movements to and fro.
They stare through lovely eyes, yet do not seek
An answering gaze, or that a man should speak.
Had I a load of gold, and should I come
Bribing their friendship, and to buy a home,
They would stare harder and would slightly frown:
I am a stranger from the distant town.
Oh, with what patience I have tried to win
The favour of the hostess of the Inn!
Have I not offered toast on frothing toast
Looking toward the melancholy host,
Praised the old wall-eyed mare to please the groom,
Laughed to the laughing maid and fetched her broom;
Stood in the background not to interfere
When the grave ancients frolicked at their beer;
Talked only in my turn, and made no claim
For recognition or by voice or name,
Content to listen, and to watch the blue
Or grey of eyes, or what good hands can do?

Sun-freckled lads, who at the dusk of day
Stroll through the village with a scent of hay
Clinging about you from the windy hill,
Why do you keep your secret from me still?
You loiter at the corner of the street:
I in the distance silently entreat.
I know too well I'm city-soiled, but then
So are to-day ten million other men.
My heart is true: I've neither will nor charms
To lure away your maidens from your arms.
Trust me a little. Must I always stand
Lonely, a stranger from an unknown land?

There is a riddle here. Though I'm more wise
Than you, I cannot read your simple eyes.
I find the meaning of their gentle look
More difficult than any learned book.
I pass: perhaps a moment you may chaff
My walk, and so dismiss me with a laugh.
I come: you all, most grave and most polite,
Stand silent first, then wish me calm good-night.
When I go back to town someone will say:
"I think the stranger must have gone away."
And "Surely!" someone else will then reply.
Meanwhile within the dark of London I
Shall, with my forehead resting on my hand,
Not cease remembering your distant land,
Endeavouring to reconstruct aright
How some treed hill has looked in evening light,
Or be imagining that blue of skies
Now as in Heaven, now as in your eyes,
Or in my mind confusing looks or words
Of yours with dawnlight, or the song of birds;
Not able to resist, not even keep
Myself from hovering near you in my sleep:
You still as careless to my thought and me
As flowers to the thought of honey-bee.

A ROMAN LETTER

BY RICHARD ALDINGTON

YOUR letters, my best Rufinus, were handed to me late in the afternoon as I was returning from the chase. I had spent most of the day in the immense oak and beech forest which darken the northern parts of this province with their green shadow. As I emerged from the last fringe of these trees on my way home, bringing, I must confess, fuller tablets than nets, glowing with beneficent exercise and tranquil from my hours of woodland silence, I looked across the wide undulating plain at my feet, noticing with pleasure the deep golden haze which lay upon its fields and dwellings. The rich warmth, the tranquillity of this spectacle, coinciding so precisely with my own sensations, bred in me a contentment I can hardly explain, and I asked myself if anything could increase my immediate delight in living. At that moment, as if in answer, your messenger appeared guided by one of my slaves and presented me with your letters.

The news you give me of Rome is curious. Congratulate Sulpicius for me on his appointment as proconsul. This dignity is, I suppose, the price of some shameful complaisance? Strange that reasonable men should so degrade themselves! But yet, how natural! Such infamies will be common just so long as men place felicity in a prince's favour. I should not have thought it possible that so well-bred a woman as Calpurnia could ever have deserved the infamous words of the satirist:

*"Nulli, Thai, negas: sed si te non pudet istud
Hac saltem pudeat, Thai, negare nihil."*

But I am become such a rustic that the manners of the court are foreign to me. This lack of self-control, this disregard of elementary prudence seem to me remarkable in so distinguished a woman. Doubtless, her greatest fault is her inability to conceal the others—that our sophisticated and, I fear, corrupt society does not easily pardon.

I congratulate you on the birth of a son, a felicity which I know you have long desired. Your reflections on this subject and the delicacy of your reference to the death of my little Marcus, please me. Your opinion that marital affection is only rightly completed by the birth of children is wholesome and true, yet what anxiety, what trembling (and, alas, what bitter grief perhaps!) we create for ourselves with the lives of these fragile and tender beings! Be the omen null! I must not disturb your happiness with my sad memories.

And now, my Rufinus, I must remonstrate with you seriously. The news which you communicate with so much complacence; that the Emperor is inclined to yield to your importunities and to recall me from exile; fills me with apprehension. Let me explain. When, on the receipt of a false delation, the Master of the world was pleased to order my sequestration to this remote solitude, I thanked the lying tongue which rendered me this service and the imperial credulity and severity, which, in seeking to punish me, conferred on me a long-desired reward. To be free of Rome, of its artifices and interminable intrigues, its huge crowds, its vacuous and febrile energy, its vanity, its profligacy—what happiness, what good fortune! Fiducia and I left that immense, murmuring metropolis, which had so cruelly robbed us of our beloved child, with hearts more jocund than we dared show. To the last I dreaded the Emperor might recall his sentence!

Here I live tranquilly, here I possess that best of gifts praised by the Attic songster—*hygainein men ariston*—and, in addition to health, solitude and peace of mind which he forgot to praise. Among these vast woods which are sometimes enchanted by the noon silence sacred to Pan, sometimes vocal with the susurrant sea-wind, on this sun-drenched hillside fertile in olives and grapes, among these countrymen whose lives are sober idylls, my mind has been charmed and my thoughts have been busy with meditation. Not that I have thought deeply or well, but I have lived in a half intellectual ecstasy—perhaps I am a nympholept!

You tell me that the fashionable ladies of the capital are amusing jaded nerves with the cult of a new Eastern sect. I am not surprised. Cities, with their enervating, artificial influences, must expose trivial minds to superstition and religious folly.

Here it is not so; here, under this sky, on the breast of the divine earth, that noble maternal Demeter who nourishes me, I am liberated to feel mysterious springs of life and death. Here I do not need to evoke the gods; they are at hand, manifest; palpable; even the gross rustic deities have a peculiar and fitting significance. But they are so familiar, so companionable that I look continually beyond them for some greater more pervading truth, which I apprehend rather by intuition than by logic. As you know, I have never been an enemy to the religious myths; I have held that they are necessary to impose on the slow imagination of the common people those truths which we perceive immediately. The destruction of this convenient symbolism, unnecessary to finished souls, would lead to unsuspected evils, perhaps, absurd as the idea must seem, to the extinction of the Empire. The truth which I seek will not dispossess the gods; it will make life clearer, more rational for choice spirits.

I am struggling, you see, to express something I have felt rather than thought; you must have noticed that solitude is more apt to fill us with pleasureable emotions than with exact ideas. The latter are the coin with which we pay our entrance into refined society, but with these intimate emotions, so vague but so delicious, we entertain ourselves. Sometimes it seems to me that we speculate too much on the nature of the gods—whom we cannot know—and investigate too little the earth and the mind of men, which we can know. If such an investigation is ever carried out thoroughly and reasonably I suspect that the necessity for any but popular religion will disappear. We shall not have to deplore the fact that our learned men waste so much time on useless arcana of priest-craft. Yet I wish I could make you feel the attraction of the religious beliefs of these peasants. Their faith and my skepticism are singularly at one, for the natural forces which I try to understand by investigation they accept and comprehend by deification. To them as to me the revolution of the seasons, the lights of heaven, the forces of germination, fecundity, and decay, the green envelope of the rugged earth which feeds and clothes us and receives our ashes, are all mysterious and holy. The only difference is that they require to worship in their own idealized form representations of these forces which I am content to perceive direct, without symbolical and poetic

interpretations. The aloofness of Artemis (I prefer the Greek names), the splendour of her brother, the opulence of Demeter, and the gross desires of Priapus are conceived by them in these visible images; but since they are truths which must exist as long as human life, and longer, what matters the symbolism by which they are apprehended? As for these unwholesome speculations and grotesque myths which enervate our urban people, be assured they are figments which will never overcome the profound common-sense of our peasants.

You must find my chatter as persistent and as strident as that of the cicada in the olive-tree above me, but if I have wearied you I have at least had the pleasure of imagining that I was talking idly to you. My mood will show you that I am generally content and not at all anxious to encumber with my person the Emperor's ante-rooms. From this moss-grown marble seat, on which I write, I can see two young women placing flowers beneath the rough wood figure of Dionysus. What permanence have our philosophizings or those unhealthy Eastern myths beside this sane human humble acceptance of natural facts? Long after all memory of us and of those Syrian charlatans has vanished other peasant girls will lay similar offerings before the figures of their gods which, like ours, will symbolize wine, wheat, the death of autumn and the rebirth of spring, maternity, and desire. Doubtless their floral tributes will not make the harvest any less ample.

Vale.

DUST FOR SPARROWS

BY REMY DE GOURMONT

Translated by Ezra Pound

165

Bismarck in repudiating the paternity of the aphorism: might makes right, committed an act of in consequence, or more probably of diplomatic hypocrisy.

166

Revolutions are necessary incidents in progressive evolution. It would be preferable to avoid them; but history shows, unfortunately, that humanity has never made a step forward . . . or let us say, rather, that the demands of the majority have never forced a concession from the egoism of the minority . . . save across blood and fire. St Paul said, it is some time ago: *Sine sanguinis effusione nulla fuit remissio.* (No remission of sins without blood.)

167

The privileges of the aristocracy before the (French) revolution were not less grounded than those of the present bourgeoisie, yet how indignant are the great-grand-nephews of those who had Louis XVI guillotined, when some other strata of future bourgeois wants to make effective this motto of Liberty-Equality-Fraternity, which has up to now been used only as a decoration.

168

Without the sentimental cult of the fatherland, nations are today only great commercial houses, united or separated by interest, and carrying the egoism of alliances to such a pitch that it is permissible to hate one's ally of last evening, and to arm against him, since for reasons of supremacy or of frustrate cupidity, he will be your enemy on the morrow. Italy and Austria, for example.

169

The divorce law is useless and hypocrite, first because it has no effect upon custom; secondly because free love, if honest, should not hide behind legal formulas.

170

Because of the fatality of relation of government over the governed, there is often nothing so like a tyrant as his implacable enemy when the latter has come into power.

171

What is most to be feared from the participation of women in government is that they will adopt a morality and sensibility as precarious as those of the male; which will cause an appreciable decline in the forces which maintain the cohesion and equilibrium of society.

172

The wishes of public opinion are always accomplished in the long run, despite the bias speeches of politicians and the vicious practices of governments; as life triumphs over "Dulcamara's Mixture" and the impostures of apothecaries.

173

It is quite probable that the gravity of social demands as well as the anarchist madness comes from the enormous and ill-distributed funds spent on public instruction, which forms a pernicious intellectual proletariat, while leaving thousands of unfortunates in absolute intellectual indigence.

174

If there is no social problem, but only a working-man's problem, in the Argentine, we must despair of the ideality of a country in which the masses are stirred only for the sake of bettering an immediate situation and without any plan or higher aspiration whatsoever for the future.

175

There are only two differences between the constitutional and parliamentary monarchies of Europe and the South American republics: first, in the monarchies the head of the state is more or less hereditarily legitimate, which doesn't much matter; and in the republics he is apocryphally elective; second, in the monarchies there is a true democracy and in the republics there is a false aristocracy of plebeians.

175

A monarchy where a socialist minister comes into power is plausible, but as sincere as a papacy with an academy of atheists serving for sacred college.

177

A religion, moral code, civilization, politics which have not the fundamental intention of aiding the well-being and happiness of mankind are necessarily false and pernicious.

178

A politics which would sacrifice the happiness of present generations for that of future generations would be suicidal, for being incapable of its own perfection humanity would live in a perpetual and useless sacrifice.

179

There is no indignation more sincere or more comic than that of a capitalist fighting with workmen who demand successive increases in pay.

"But where will they stop, the lunatics?"

Yes, they will stop when they are as cracked as you are yourself, sir.

180

The best thing in republics is the loyalty and almost religious affection of the people for the great men who incarnate the national tradition. That is to say, it is precisely the same force which has preserved monarchies through the ages.

What sincerity can we find in public indignation against functionaries who profit by their public place to transact private business—in countries where the politicians cheat the State, where the business men smuggle, where no one has the slightest scruple about making declarations contrary to the fiscal interest.

Political and social constitutions founded on bourgeois criteria can go on without pains of opposition if the favoured do not abuse their privileged position. The people, as ages' experience and the realities of the moment demonstrate, if it attains small but secure situations, if it escapes, from above, the excitements of those who would exploit it without pity; from beneath, the excitements of those who would do so with some moderation, the *people* is anti-revolutionary.

Everyone pities orphans. But children set between a base father and a brutal mother!

Civil wars are by far harsher and more cruel than international wars, because blows are more painful from friends than from strangers; because one fights with more rage against people one knows and whom one knows to be conscious and voluntary enemies than against those who attack us only in obedience to a will exterior to themselves. Two soldiers of different nations embrace without bitterness when peace arrives, two protagonists in civil war separate huffily because they hated each other before, because they have fought with hate, and because after to-morrow they will start "getting ready for the next."

To be continued

POMEGRANATE

BY D. H. LAWRENCE

You tell me I am wrong.
Who are you, who is anybody, to tell me I am wrong?
I am not wrong.

In Syracuse, rock left bare by the viciousness of Greek women,
No doubt you have forgotten the pomegranate trees in flower,
Oh, so red, and such a lot of them.

Whereas at Venice,
Abhorrent, green, grey-bearded,
Whose Doges were old and had ancient eyes,
In the dense foliage of the inner garden,
Pomegranates like bright green stones,
And barbed, barbed with a crown,
Oh, horrible crown, of spiked green metal,
Actually were growing.

Now, in Tuscany
Pomegranates to warm your hands at,
Braziers,
And crowns,
Kingly, generous, tilting crowns,
Over the left eyebrow.

And, if you dare, the fissure!

Do you mean to tell me you will see no fissure?
You prefer to look on the plain side?

For all that, the setting suns are open
The last day fissured open with to-morrow,
Rosy, tender, glittering within there.

Do you mean to tell me there should be no fissure?
No glittering compact drops of dawn?
Do you mean it is wrong, the gold-filmed skin, integument, shown
ruptured?

For my part, I prefer my heart to be broken.
It is so lovely, dawn-kaleidoscopic, within the crack.

DEAD MATTER IN AFRICA

BY LLEWELYN POWYS

THE sun was exactly overhead beating down upon the parched African landscape.

I was riding with a friend over the plain of Lol-Dureto which lies under the Eburu mountains.

A hundred yards away two zebra, a male and female, stood playing together. The stallion would whinny at the mare and trot round her. They were evidently lovers. With their thick necks and striped flanks they looked typical productions of Africa, obstinate, and fantastic. "Look at those two damned zebra," I said to my friend, "I bet you a rupee, I send a bullet into the guts of one of them." I got off my pony and raising my rifle took steady aim. A moment later and the mare zebra was down and kicking about in the dust and dry grass. At the sound of the report the stallion had stopped short in its gambols and galloped away; but it did not go far. It soon stood still and turned to look at us; and, as I remounted, and we rode away, I saw it trotting slowly back to its mate who was now lying quite still on her side.

"You made pretty good practice," said my friend. "Yes, it was not bad shooting," I answered.

We continued on our way together, but for some reason or another I felt over-sensitive that day and was troubled by what I had done.

It seemed to me that it was quite unpardonable to have taken the life of that zebra so carelessly, for no reason at all.

Far up in the zenith the equatorial sun blazed down upon us. I knew that in the sight of that heartless Gorgon's eye of Africa it was no hellish thing that I had done. I knew that he was far too used to African ways and the cruelty of tooth and claw.

The next day I rode to the Nagum valley and spent many hours dosing two thousand hoggets with blue-stone and mustard. The incident of the day before had completely gone out of my mind; and even if I had remembered it the occasion hardly offered much opportunity for sentiment over a shot zebra, with so many sheep

waiting for their medicine in the heat and dust of the boma. I dosed them until I was too tired to speak. Pushing the narrow neck of the Worcester-sauce bottle into the sides of their mouths and holding it there, while they swallowed the proper quantity of liquid.

When at last I had finished, I mounted my pony and began riding home. For no especial reason I selected to return by way of the Lol-Dureto plain; I fancied perhaps that it was shorter.

I was tired and my pony was tired; oppressed by the late heat of the African afternoon.

In a half dazed condition I noticed subconsciously that there were a number of vultures circling about the sky before me. What is disturbing them? I wondered. At that moment my mind received a strange jolt and I was wide awake.

The vultures were circling over the zebra I had shot the day before; but they had not so much as plucked out her eyes, because the stallion was still there, at her side, trotting to and fro, and furiously driving away any bird that settled on the ground near his dead mate. And as I sat on my pony watching the scene, I knew that this untamed fantastical animal, restlessly running to and fro, in the vivid sunshine of that tropical noon, had thrown out a challenge against the material universe, more desperate, more beautiful, and more convincing than any I had ever heard from pulpit or platform.

TWO POEMS
BY ANDRE SPIRE

DAGMARA

Petite fille, petite fille,
Tu erres depuis hier dans mon esprit.

Tu jouais au croquet.
Je passe. Je te photographie.
Tu me surprends.
Je te dis: Je vous photographie,
Mademoiselle!
Tu réponds: oh! Monsieur!
En redressant ton cou brûlé, et tu souris.

Oui, je te tiens dans ma boîte magique,
Et j'emporte avec moi, pour toute ma vie,
Tes yeux noirs, tes cheveux tombants sur tes sourcils,
Ta face mince, tes dents d'arabe, ton teint d'olive,
Et ton corps souple et maigre, que peignirent mille fois
Sur des cratères d'argile rouge
Des artisans de ton pays.

Tu es fâchée, tu es fâchée fillette?

Je vais m'asseoir. Je lis. J'entends des pas.
Tu n'as plus ton maillet; tu t'approches, cambrée.
Contre le mur chaud de l'hôtel tu t'arcoutes;
Et y graves ton nom comme un chevrier sur un hêtre.

Dagmara, Dagmara, petite grecque. . . .

M I D I

Quand midi t'allonge à terre,
Suant,
Les oreilles bruissantes,
Au milieu des abeilles trépimant les lavandes
Et les agaves turgescents,
Au milieu des fourmis, des aiguilles de pins,
Des résines, des gommes, des sèves condensées, des fleurs
écarquillées,
Et qu'à tes pieds la mer
Dort abrutie entre les rochers rouges. . . .

Quand midi te colle à terre,
Au milieu des oiseaux engoncés, muets,
Ton linge brûlant ta peau comme le foyer d'une lentille,
La gorge sèche, la bouche sans salive,
La nuque étreinte, les yeux aveugles,
L'esprit vide.

Connais, connais ton Dieu!

DYNAMIC ARCHITECTURE

New Forms of the Future

BY HERMAN GEORGE SCHEFFAUER

MANY have been the efforts of the architect-creator of our day to form or even formulate an architecture which might be something greater and truer than the existing anomalies and anachronisms. The old forms of by-gone ages and civilizations not only survived as shells and skeletons, but they imposed themselves upon us tyrannically as norms and standards and dominated all architecture with a kind of mock life. Every building erected according to tradition became a kind of prison in which new forms, births, and possibilities perished. And one of the great failures of our modern civilization became monumentally visible—the inability of our culture to produce a vital architecture, bred of the spirit of our time, a concentration and a crystallization of the soul of an epoch or of a people. A visitor from ancient ages would be lost amidst our machines and the other products of our civilization—but our buildings would still be familiar to him—poor copies or bloodless simulacra of his own.

The sky-scraper is both an adaptation and an evolution or rather an aggregation. It is the multiple stratification of the story, a liberation, it is true, but almost wholly in the engineering of altitude, the result of abnormal local pressure. It is the forced fruit of financial speculation rather than artistic inspiration—it has nothing in common with the unconscious forces that determine true architecture. In its forms it is still pent within the trammels of tradition. A new liberation, a new reformation becomes necessary if our art of building is not to sink into greater and greater sterility.

There have been signs of a period of transition, of hints and prophecies in the work of such men as Olbrich, van de Velde, Wright, Mackintosh, and Poelzig, but the entire mass was still too rigid, too frozen to permit of the efflorescence of a new spirit of building. Then came the war, that great destroyer of forms—

human, national, and cultural. This meant annihilation to much that was already lifeless and soulless. It meant freedom of space and action for new forces, thoughts, and buried aspirations.

The war has thus brought a new vision to many a young architect in Europe. The war performed in spirit that which Marinetti the Futurist in a ruthless anarchism of destruction longed to perform in actuality when he declared war against the palaces and churches of Venice. Among those aspirants towards a new architecture who proceed most scientifically with the synthesis of new forms, we must reckon Erich Mendelsohn. His inventions and innovations are inspired by a great revolutionary force, by vision, intuition, and structural logic. He exhibited a number of his designs and models a short time ago and these aroused intense interest and speculation among the architects of his own land and their foreign colleagues.

The work of this young builder seems to point the way which architectural development will pursue in the future. His break with the past is definite and clear. His creations determine their own forms out of the nature of modern building materials, out of function, use, and expediency. From the clarity and simplicity of their structural organization, the strength and purity of the architectonic will which they display, and the inherent power as expressed in their control of great masses, we obtain the impression that we are face to face here with a new conception, a new philosophy of the feeling for space—that sixth sense all great architects must possess.

Something of the austerity and inevitability of that law which dominates the monuments of the great original epochs of architecture—the Greek temple and the Gothic cathedral—and decrees that these are to be understood only in the light of their constructional conditions, is visible in these new shapes. This law is simple: the external form is to be conceived merely as flesh and skin in relation to the structure of the skeleton.

Thus the appearance of steel as a new building material was bound to postulate a new method of architectural expression, precisely as the architectural system of direct support and load, the figure T as expressed in classic architecture, and of pillar and vault as expressed in Gothic architecture, brought forth the organic architectural form inherent in the material and the method. This ought to be a natural and logical conclusion, after we have seen

how wonderfully the energies latent in iron have expressed themselves in mechanics, in machinery, in the means of transportation—and in war.

It is chiefly because the possibilities of iron and steel have been exploited in a mechanical instead of in an aesthetic sense owing to the supremacy of the stationary or the moveable machine that the architect has failed to take advantage of the great opportunities presented to him by this material. He has been untrue to the very soul of architecture and has confined himself to draping and garnishing first-rate works of engineering with all kinds of nondescript decorative lumber and non-consequentialities. He has distorted and repressed the freedom and the "reach" of steel by crushing and confining it within the rigid limits of some cubicular scheme or system derived from the past.

It was necessary, as I have said, that this entire world of congealed and petrified tradition be convulsed to its roots—that all human relationships be shaken, strained, and shattered before it could be freed from the bondage of the merely expedient and the calculative, as well as from the tutelage of decadent efforts at a renaissance of renassances. The means by which enlightenment came were brutal, mad, and ruthless, but the great cataclysm has proved to us that architecture as a modern art must begin precisely at that point at which the nineteenth century imagined its task had already been completed.

It is significant that Erich Mendelsohn's basic principle of a new language and of a new liberation for architecture came to him shortly before the great catastrophe which engulfed the hollow and jerry-built structure of our civilization. The young architect had already seen some fragments of his visions realized in steel, glass, and concrete, and the music of new forms erect itself into a harmonious system. These anticipations have now been overtaken by the new tendencies and the new aspirations in all fields of intellectual and spiritual activity.

The load in construction was no longer to be directly related to the support or the pillar, but was able to distribute and diffuse itself over great areas, or concentrate itself on small *foci*. The wall was no longer to be subject to the immutable law of the perpendicular; if the architect chooses to slant a wall outward like a limb of the V, in order to capture more sunlight, steel and concrete remain loyal to him. Steel and concrete give men a freedom in

architecture almost analogous to that which nature gives to many of her forms. Thick glass, clear or coloured, for roofs or walls or floors, opens up unconjectured vistas of luminosity and crystalline splendour, causing a house to vibrate with light, to unfold like a jewel of many forces, of dynamics and design. "Movement" and mass are given a new significance when contemplated from the viewpoint of Einstein's Theory of Relativity.

It will prove interesting to analyze a few of these astonishing yet organic structures, most of them industrial.

The Aerodrome is the central unit of a large and comprehensive plant. Here the component forms of the structure are clearly co-ordinated—the airship halls, the hangars, and the workshops. The construction of the central shed reveals a bold and majestic use of the girder, giving a gesture of great liberty and power.

This earlier design of Mendelsohn's discloses an almost puritanic use of material in relation to the skeleton of the building. The building itself seems to resist the accretion of the slightest superfluity. His later designs, equally grandiose in conception, are based upon a greater compactness, a more rounded and sculptur-esque expression—the edifices seem eloquent of an intense and tenacious experience. The central core of the structure or group of structures now rises tower-like; great arches and bays surround it and rivet themselves to the whole or mount like terraces toward the dominant block.

In the structures of the classical historical period, the body or bulk of the building remains entirely passive, dead masses resting in ponderous inertness on their foundations. But in this new architecture—as we may see in the example of the Boxing Establishment, the vertical lines and masses impart a kind of driving force or impetus to the separate bulks and give movement to them. The lines then flow and mount and leap higher until the entire complex is given architectural activity and tension—the whole an interplay of bending, rising, superincumbent, and protuberant "tracts."

The architect of the future will not be limited by his material nor cursed by the blight of mere utilitarianism. His phantasy will not be borne down by the weight of huge ashlars nor the breaking-point of a stone lintel or a brick arch. Material is merely a premise, a means whereby the artist may achieve freedom, realize his purpose, and find incentives for ever new audacities.



AN AERODROME. BY ERICH MENDELSSOHN



BOXING AND PACKING ESTABLISHMENT. BY ERICH MENDELSSOHN



FACTORY FOR OPTICAL INSTRUMENTS. BY ERICH MENDELSSOHN





THE HOUSE OF FRIENDSHIP. BY ERICH MENDELSON

The architect will proceed in part like the sculptor who has made his model and is about to cast it in bronze or plaster. The architect will shape his matrix in ribs of steel and casings of wood and cast the children of his fancy in enduring concrete. For example the Factory for Optical Instruments has become an actual monolith. We have the powerful surrounding base-rings of the mounting or assembling shops, the turrets of brilliant glass for the mechanical workshops in which the most delicate instruments are made, the tracts of the staircases and elevators between the turrets, the offices and mailing-rooms—the whole a live organism of concrete, steel and glass, pulsating with the currents of modern industry. The masses of the walls are no longer fettered to the traditional form of a four-cornered surface—one of the faces of an eight-cornered cube—to be cut up into doors and windows. No, the walls themselves have become a function; their openings are no longer limited to purposes of light, communication or ventilation. The glass-bays of these towers are "gates of light," each an apex, a culmination, a pole to which all the other members are subordinated.

The classic principle of load and support, as has already been pointed out, had for its goal the balance and repose of all the various masses. But in the structure of the future the masses are to overcome gravity and inertia and find their centres or cores of energy within themselves.

The examples shown here have been entirely industrial—but the next step, the creation of the home or the sacerdotal edifice, depends merely upon the creative instinct accepting its inspiration from the message or the purpose of such a building. It is thus with The House of Friendship, a crystalline, polychrome, cathedral-like structure, radiant and luminous. Great Halls of the People are to rear themselves on city summits or outlying eminences, the religion of peace and international understanding is to erect its domes. Colour in masses or in line, broad bands of white or black or gold outlining coloured walls or crestings, as well as a studied use of metals will serve to give a still greater vitality and beauty to the new architecture.

The intuitive element in building plays its part here. The end in view will always produce its own form if the architectonic instinct be properly experienced, for once form in all its universality

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has been liberated from the dark secracies of being and becoming, then all its inflections are but as reflexes of the same creative will that recognizes the law and brings it into play.

It is clear that these examples are but the first tentative efforts towards the materialization of a new architecture. Unconsciously the rococo and the bizarre may still operate in them. They stand in the same relation to the fully developed or final form that the first automobile or aeroplane bore to its heirs and successors. A pathfinder has found a way out of the architectural *impasse*.

In the accompanying sketches Erich Mendelsohn has merely given visible form to his principles—these drawings are mere notes, data, fixations of compositions suddenly conceived, not out of the air, but as projections of definite plans. They are abstractions which await their birth in matter.

Owing to the immense difficulties which beset the building trades the projects upon which the young innovator is at present engaged are few, but in these few his ideas are already emerging triumphantly. They prove that the artist, the master-builder, is not defunct; that the true creator need only place his ear to the giant heart of the epoch and link himself to the chain of its energies in order to find those forms in which the age would express itself.

"I REACHED UP FOR YOUR HEART—"

BY G. O. WARREN

My Love, I reached up for your heart
And broke it from your sweet, secluded tree
For fear it would not ripen there for me.

I know I hurried your faint spring,
And would not wait for summer, or fruit-fall.
I seemed to hear wild harvest voices call

Across your fields, to see your dew
Blurred by the hurrying feet of what might be
Unless your April self were plucked by me.

PARIS LETTER

February, 1921

PARIS is very tired this winter. The Theatre has sunk so low that to think of the matinée or evening which one had the imprudence to dedicate to it is like remembering an ocean voyage: seasickness sets in at once.

At the Comédie Française, heroines, centenarians for the most part (and all perforse mistresses of marshals or cabinet ministers), are playing the tragedies of M Lavedan, doing honour to that member of the Academy, and those of Corneille, causing that ancient intransigent to blush in his tomb.

Take the three best actresses in Paris. Mme Bertha Bady who "created" all of Bataille's works out of affection for the author and, by a more literary inclination, declaims with genius the poems of Baudelaire, is ill. Mme Véra Sergine, the *belle-fille* of the great painter Renoir, has a talent as high-tempered and nobly popular as the face of a Muse of the Faubourgs on a night during the Revolution; she is absent on tour. More happy is Mme Eva Francis, our only real lyric artist. Her natural pathos is never in peril of becoming banal, and her beautiful large arms are always composing fresh gestures. She is lending a little of her forces to the same Bataille (in *l'Homme à la Rose*) and reserving them all for her favourite poet, Claudel, whose three heroic virgins, Cygne de Coufontaine, Loumyir, and Pensée, she will presently embody. The presentation in March at the only theatre where the acting is always good and often delicious, the Vieux Colombier, will be an event, with such an interpreter of the Cycle of three generations on which Claudel worked for ten years (*l'Otage*, *le Pain Dur*, *le Père Humilié*, a single family 'through seventy years, and two Popes, Pius VII and Pius IX, one off stage and the other on).

In the interest of thoroughness let us not forget to note that Mme Sarah Bernhardt—professor of energy for a whole century—playing the part of a young man at this moment, is stealing bright splendours from the very limbo of Death, and with a desperate gift of giving pleasure which will illumine her to the end, still finds the secret of touching and conquering our hearts.

The magazines aren't a bit better than the shows. All the same we can hope for happy effects from the singular things which are happening to some of the most important of them. Like fresh-water hydras, they are being cut in half and the two parts at once begin to wriggle and to live.

It is by this process that *La Revue Hebdomadaire* (which only recently printed an edition of thirty-five thousand copies and was the most widely read review in France) is, while it remains the *Revue Hebdomadaire*, becoming *La Revue de la Semaine*: more virtuous in this new form but a little less Catholic; however both of them rest blessed by the Pope and by the representative of the King in France: M Leon Daudet—proving that the sleeping bourgeoisie of France is still tenderly attached to the institutions of the Past.

These two organs are divided by personalities alone. The former director and the former secretary—both editors-in-chief at present—M Laudet and M Le Grix, engaged in an attempt to poison one another and, in spite of the efforts of their mutual friends, among whom Mme de Noailles manœuvres with much charm, have not yet renounced their fell design; a drama of passion at which all Paris assists, in awe.

Sweeter and more suggestive is the division of *La Revue de Paris*. Its new half will begin to burgeon in March, with M Marcel Prévost—of whom nothing remains to be said; the directors will be M Paul Bourget, the greatest financial-literary success in France; M Bédier, historian and epic poet in one, the admirable author of *Tristan et Yseult*; and the “*clou*” on this half, which will be called *Revue de France*, will be M Pierre Benoît's new novel, *Le Lac Salé* (devoted to the customs of the Mormons).

The old *Revue de Paris* has had rare good luck. It has retained the more venerable of its two directors, M Lavis, the celebrated historian who was for several generations an impassioned preacher and prophet at the Sorbonne; and it has discovered an intelligent man, M André Chaumeix, who is at the same time editor-in-chief of the *Débats* and was lately concerned in the Florentine tragedy of the *Revue Hebdomadaire*. At once—a thing unheard of in the annals of our great reviews for twenty years—he dared to call in the most distinguished of the young novelists, M Alexandre Arnoux (*La Nuit de Saint Barnabé*), M Louis Chadourne (*Terre de*

Chanaan, a novel composed last year on the banks of the Orinoco and in the latitude of the Antilles), and finally he has acquired the new novel (*Suzanne et le Pacifique*) by Jean Giraudoux, of the lacy-hands and spirit like a foil, the perfect dandy of our days, whom having seen, America so justly loves.

The young reviews continue to be innumerable and insignificant. Between them and the great established reviews there are two devoted to letters, *La Nouvelle Revue Française*, to the austerity of which due homage has been rendered, and *Les Ecrits Nouveaux* (chez Emile-Paul) of which more may have to be said some time.

I must speak now of the two different explosions which have alone wakened Paris from its weariness. On one side there is the increasingly rumbling (and increasingly noticed) activity of the Dadaists (last night at the varnishing for the Exposition of the most *fauve* of them all, the painter-poet Picabia, they were like puppies barking around a carved bone as they surrounded Jean Cocteau, dressed in a high-hat *à la Murger*; they are preparing various atrocities to annoy M André Gide, to charm Princess Soutzo and Princess Lucien Murat, and to affright the French bourgeoisie which is sad enough already with its uncertain income). On the other side of the world, the last fires of Olympus attacking the too lively lights of Montmartre—the new efflorescence of Mme de Noailles, whose *Forces Eternelles* has just come off the press.

ANDRÉ GERMAIN

DUBLIN LETTER

February, 1921

THE peculiarity of Irish authors is that they seem to be no wiser than their public. The notion that one man may be wiser than his fellows, that an individual may receive the gift of a novel and great idea, is foreign to the atmosphere of Irish literature. The Irish writer, to a remarkable degree, derives his ideals from the Irish demos. And the Why is plain as way to parish church. Irish nationality, as interpreted by the writers of the "Literary Renaissance," is an ideal entity: the real Irish nation, though it may differ as much from the romantic Ireland of song and story as did Queen Elizabeth personally from the Gloriana of her courtiers and poets, is Catholic Ireland, which preserves a deep and unalterable conviction that there is no true Ireland outside itself. The Lost Sheep of the House of Israel, the Anglo-Irish, have hitherto represented Ireland to the world, and as it turns out, have misrepresented it. How indeed could the Anglo-Irish, without a religion and never even quite sure of a country—a race as naturally cosmopolitan as the Graeco-Roman Jews, and to which the Union opened out its natural destiny in the far-flung British Empire—become the interpreters of that immobile and exclusive tradition? Their romantic treatment of reality was from the first an offence: for the Anglo-Irish of the nineteenth century had the genial notion of treating the whole *matière d'Irlande* romantically. Infatuated mortals! As well might the Graeco-Roman Jews have had the notion of treating romantically the Babylonian Captivity. American and English collectors of Anglo-Irish literature should be warned that the bulk of this literature is uncanonical.

It would be an amusing exercise to draw up the true canon of modern Irish literature, but only amusing, for a canon is determined in the light of events, when the false prophets have been sifted from the true, and the fires of poetry have burned through the changing tastes of four or five generations. Perhaps, after all, Anglo-Irish literature, interrupted and disorganized by the events

of 1916, had a vision of the truer Ireland, to which Irish literature will yet return; but it was inevitable, while the inner and exclusive Ireland remained preoccupied with the language-question, that Anglo-Irish literature should never feel fully entitled to speak directly in its name. Since 1916 however a number of writers have appeared who speak with a new note of confidence out of the heart of the formerly tongue-tied nationality. Of these the ablest perhaps is the militantly Catholic Mr Aodh de Blácam, whose mood may be described as one of genial bitterness: you have to accept the doctrine which he preaches in its extreme form, that Catholic Ireland is nothing less than the Peculiar People of the modern world, before you can be diverted or instructed by his undoubted sprightliness and culture. One wonders in reading *Holy Romans*, the story in which he tells of a young London Irishman who returns to the land and to the faith of his fathers, whether the interest is not autobiographical; for it is generally the convert who takes so much delight as he in defaming the religion from which, like his hero, he may happen to have escaped. Grant his assertion that "Protestant people want nationality at less than cost price, and they never get the real article"; grant that the New Jerusalem is being built somewhere in the West of Ireland; and perhaps your feelings will suffer no jar in reading of saintly old men and generous young visionaries manufacturing bombs and concerting assassination in the heart of London. Somehow however those who have been used to reading of such doings in the good-humoured world of Mr Chesterton's detective-stories, will find the biblical unction imparted to them by Mr de Blácam a little frightening.

A far more considerable novelist, though not possessed of so briskly-tripping a pen as Mr de Blácam, is Mr Daniel Corkery, a writer of growing importance in Irish literature. The student of human nature in Ireland frequently catches a glimpse, amongst those who used to be called the "peasantry," of strange enigmatic types, who give a hint for a short narrative or drama. It is never quite enough to go on with, or to elaborate into a life-story or romance: short violent tales of a folk which these Catholic writers naturally know far more intimately than any Anglo-Irish writer who has preceded them, are perhaps the most distinctive product of recent Irish literature. The masterpiece in this kind is probably

The Weaver's Grave, by the late Seumas O'Kelly; and Mr Corkery, in A Munster Twilight and in The Hounds of Banba, often rises to a quiet mastery in this form of art. On the other hand, a work written with so much skill and power of observation as The Threshold of Quiet—a long story—was almost a demonstration that this inner and exclusive Catholic Ireland is not a rich enough field for a novel of human life at the full. How can we interest ourselves in the dim psychology of a handful of helpless people when we feel that all the tragedy would lift if one of them should go out into the morning woods and conceive a glorious idea? Mother Nature enfolds Cork City with divine allurements, but no one thinks of doing so.

In The Hounds of Banba all is changed, and the "quiet desperation" of The Threshold of Quiet is now the desperate resolution of gunmen. Someone appears to have conceived an idea, but it is not an idea which has come out of the morning woods or which makes one man wiser than his fellows. It is nothing more or less than the sombre idea of Catholic Ireland, embodied in the quatrain of the old Irish poet translated by Mr Corkery:

"Life conquereth still: as dust the whirlwinds blow—
Alexander and Caesar and all their power and due!
Tara is grass, and Troy itself lieth low—
It may be that Death will find the English too!"

This idea, which from century to century issues out of the bogs lands in the semblance of a ravening dragon, might seem a challenge to the fated sword of some Irish Siegfried of the Literary Renascence, the champion of a liberating culture, but for its power of transforming itself in the intervals into the likeness of a beautiful woman, Kathleen ni Houlahan, the common muse of Anglo-Irish literature and of the inner and exclusive Catholic Ireland. The situation is a difficult one, and the facts would seem to suggest that the dragon is really an enchanted princess, herself pining to be delivered from these agonistic transformations. Whence will the Deliverer come? From the old Irish culture which clings to the ancient language and traditions, or from musings in the morning woods of the modern world?

It is scarcely surprising, in the present national mood of almost

religious exaltation, that certain visionaries have begun to foretell a kind of Irish Messiah. They appear to take for granted that he will come of Gaelic stock, feeling justified, I suppose, in ignoring to this extent the lesson of human experience, that fixed preconceptions are liable to disappointment. Perhaps he will come as a jester, causing a ripple of oblivious laughter to pass over the countenance of the Ireland of Sorrows: a whimsical Cachullin of whose beneficent prowess Mr James Stephens might in his extreme old age be the devout St John.

JOHN EGLINTON

BOOK REVIEWS

THE SACRED WOOD

THE SACRED WOOD. *By T. S. Eliot. 155 pages. 16mo.*
Alfred A. Knopf. New York.

THE Sacred Wood is a thoughtful book; its well-knit architecture recalls Trollope's comment upon Castle Richmond. It has "no appearance of having been thrown out of its own windows." As a revival of enjoyment it has value, but in what it reveals as a definition of criticism it is especially rich. The connection between criticism and creation is close; criticism naturally deals with creation but it is equally true that criticism inspires creation. A genuine achievement in criticism is an achievement in creation; as Mr Eliot says, "It is to be expected that the critic and the creative artist should frequently be the same person." Much light is thrown on the problems of art in Mr Eliot's citing of Aristotle as an example of the perfect critic—perfect by reason of his having the scientific mind. Too much cannot be said for the necessity in the artist, of exact science.

What Mr Eliot says of Swinburne as a critic, one feels to be true. "The content," of Swinburne's critical essays "is not, in any exact sense, criticism." Nor, we agree, is it offered by Swinburne as such; he wrote "as a poet, his notes upon poets whom he admired." Mr Eliot allows Swinburne, perhaps, a sufficiently high place as a poet; to imply that he does not, is to disregard the positively expressed acceptance of his genius; nevertheless, in the course of the essay on Swinburne as Poet, he says, "agreed that we do not (and I think that the present generation does not) greatly enjoy Swinburne," et cetera. Do we not? There is about Swinburne the atmosphere of magnificence, a kind of permanent association of him with King Solomon "perfumed with all the powders of the merchants, approaching in his litter"—an atmosphere which is not destroyed, one feels, even by indiscriminate browsing—and now in his verse as much as ever, as Swinburne says of the Sussex seaboard,

"you feel the sea in the air at every step." There is seeming severity in stripping a poet of his accepted paraphernalia and bringing him forth as he is, but in the stanza from *Atalanta*:

"Before the beginning of years
There came to the making of man
Time with a gift of tears;
Grief with a glass than ran"

is it not undeniable, as Mr Eliot says, that "it appears to be a tremendous statement, like statements made in our dreams; when we wake up we find that the 'glass that ran' would do better for time than for grief, and that the gift of tears would be as appropriately bestowed by grief as by time?" True, Swinburne "is concerned with the meaning of the word in a peculiar way: he employs, or rather 'works,' the word's meaning." The "flap of wings and fins" in him—to quote from *A Cameo*, is very apparent. As for "the word" however, invariably used by him as a substitute for "the object," is it always so used? "When you take to pieces any verse of Swinburne," says Mr Eliot, "you find always that the object was not there—only the word." What of

"The sea slow rising
* * * *
the rocks that shrink,
the fair brave trees with all their flowers at play?"

One of the chief charms, however, of Mr Eliot's criticism is that in his withholding of praise, an author would feel no pain. But when his praise is unmixed, the effect is completely brilliant as in the opening paragraphs of the essay on Ben Jonson. In his profound appreciation of the genius of Jonson, Mr. Eliot is perhaps more revealing than in any other of the studies in this volume and is entirely convincing in his statement that Ben Jonson is not merely the "man of letters" but is the "literary artist," who if played now, would attract thousands. The eminent robustness of Jonson appears in the lines from *The Silent Woman*, which Mr Eliot quotes:

"They shall all give and pay well, that come here,
If they will have it; and that, jewels, pearl,
Plate, or round sums to buy these. I'm not taken
With a cob-swan or a high-mounting bull,
As foolish Leda and Europa were;
But the bright gold, with Danaë. For such price
I would endure a rough, harsh Jupiter,
Or ten such thundering gamesters, and refrain
To laugh at 'em, till they are gone, with my much suffering."

One recognizes the truth of the statement that Jonson's "skill is not so much skill in plot as skill in doing without a plot" and that "what holds the play together is a unity of inspiration that radiates into plot and personages alike." The distinction made in Ben Jonson's case between brilliance of surface and mere superficiality, is well made. As Mr Eliot notes, the liveliness of Fletcher and Massinger covers a vacuum, whereas the superficies of Jonson is solid; "*the superficies is the world.*" Could the victim of an all-conspiring luxury inspire a thorn more commensurate with himself than:

"I will have all my beds blown up, not stuft;
Down is too hard; and then, mine oval room
Fill'd with such pictures as Tiberius took
From Elephantis, and dull Aretine
But coldly imitates. Then, my glasses
Cut in more subtle angles, to disperse
And multiply the figures, as I walk"

"He did not get the third dimension, but he was not trying to get it."

In these studies it is interesting to note that truth is to the author a fundamental attraction. He defines the strangeness of Blake as "merely a peculiar honesty, which in a world too frightened to be honest, is peculiarly terrifying." He says:

"And this honesty never exists without great technical accomplishment. Being a humble engraver, he had no journalistic-social career open to him, nothing to distract him from his interests, and

he knew what interested him and presents only the essential—only what can be presented and need not be explained. He was naked, and saw man naked, and from the centre of his own crystal. He approached everything with a mind unclouded by current opinions. There was nothing of the superior person about him. This makes him terrifying."

Blake's humanly personal approach to any subject that he treated, preserves him to us; he is a greener figure to the eye than Dante. It is not personal transcendence; it is as Mr Eliot observes, the combination of philosophy, theology, and poetry, which makes Dante strong and symmetrical. A conclusion with regard to Dante which has been largely held no doubt by many, is accurately expressed by Mr Eliot when he says that "Dante, more than any other poet, has succeeded in dealing with his philosophy in terms of something *perceived*." We enjoy, furthermore, the critic's ability to separate the specious from the sound when he says apropos of Landor's failure to understand Francesca: "Francesca is neither stupefied nor reformed; she is merely damned; and it is a part of damnation to experience desires that we can no longer gratify. For in Dante's Hell souls are not deadened, as they mostly are in life; they are actually in the greatest torment of which each is capable."

Although Swinburne was not as Mr Eliot says he was not, "tormented by the restless desire to penetrate to the heart and marrow of a poet," it is apparent that Mr Eliot is. In his poetry, he seems to move troutlike through a multiplicity of foreign objects and in his instinctiveness and care as a critic, he appears as a complement to the sheen upon his poetry. In his opening a door upon the past and indicating what is there, he recalls the comment made by Swinburne upon Hugo:

"Art knows nothing of death; . . . all that ever had life in it, has life in it for ever; those themes only are dead which never were other than dead. No form is obsolete, no subject out of date, if the right man be there to rehandle it."

THE LAST STAND

THE AGE OF INNOCENCE. *By Edith Wharton. 12mo. 365 pages. D. Appleton and Company. New York.*

IN CHANCERY. *By John Galsworthy. 12mo. 373 pages. Charles Scribner's Sons. New York.*

I SHOULD hate to prejudice any one against these two novels by suggesting that their significance is, in chief, due to the kinds of fiction they are not. Mrs Wharton and Mr Galsworthy have returned, as at a signal, to the work which God intended them to do: the work of *The House of Mirth* and not of *The Fruit of the Tree* or of *Summer*; the work of *The Man of Property* and not of *Beyond* and of *Saint's Progress*. That means, above all, that both these books are interesting, capable of giving satisfaction to the intelligent. Mr Galsworthy's book is another in the *Forsyte Saga*; Mrs Wharton's is a companionpiece, in theme and treatment, to James' *Portrait of a Lady*; both of them are exceedingly well written, written precisely in the style of the earlier works; both are evocations of the past, and in each the author is avowedly outside, a generation beyond, the social scene presented.

The difference between them is the difference between a family group (however mordant, however real) and a group of family portraits. The distribution of Mr Galsworthy's interest, his composition and proportion, are all faulty because, essentially, he has only created Soames Forsyte, his protagonist, by enlargement without proportion. Soames is not real, and no amount of building up the *Forsyte* background will give him actuality. Whereas Mrs Wharton's gentleman, Newland Archer, is essentially right and the social scene from which he emerges has exactly the same reality, though it is infinitely more detailed, as that of the *Val d'Arno* in a hundred Florentine portraits of the Renaissance. Mrs Wharton, whatever she intended, became interested in character; and the slips and errors of her novel do not detract in the slightest degree from the psychological accuracy of her creations. Mr Galsworthy is really done with the individual *Forsytes*: he is interested now in that

House, he is writing a social history of England. He has more humour and, thank Heaven, less pity, than before. He is sufficient, satisfactory. These are not harsh words. Mrs Wharton has still the old trick of concentration; her toxins and her tonics are equally essentialized. Even in her worst work, I do not know a single episode which has been diluted. That is why, I understand, Mrs Wharton is supposed to deal only negatively with the passions. I have never felt myself cheated by her in that way; the renunciation, and the frustration of purpose, which are prime elements in her fiction, are so passionately and so intensely tragic as to be almost unbearable. They are hardly less than a tribute to the unattainable joy of fulfilment.

What concerns me most is not the separate value of these novels in themselves. They impress me rather gallantly as the last stand of the old order of novelists. When Mrs Wharton and Mr Galsworthy betrayed their talents (or, let us say, had an off year) they did not utilize their weakness by experimenting in fiction. (They actually wrote very bad magazine stories in part, and did war work of various sorts.) If one has written novels rather finely in one tradition it is probably perilous to try another. There was the documentary fashion—it is almost *the* manner of the younger English novelists and is becoming our own—the manner of say Romain Rolland and Compton Mackenzie; or that of May Sinclair's Romantic, of Winifred Bryher's Development; of Dorothy Richardson; of James Joyce. The art of the novel is going through its private *Sturm und Drang*; it will never be as it has been and one is tempted to impatience with those who practise it in the least exciting of its forms. Unfairly tempted, because their form—especially Mrs Wharton's adaptation of it—has not only its place, but a definite freshness and validity.

It is, in brief, the novel as written by Henry James—the novel which is *composed*, with a definite centre of interest, a defined progression in scenes, a planned incidence of stress: it is the novel in which everything that has bearing *must* be put in and everything else *must* be left out. It is, I suppose, the art-novel. If you find, as I do, that that is the method which gives the highest degree of satisfaction, which gives the sense of life at its most vivid and the sense of beauty at its most profound, you will be glad that its enormous difficulties have not deterred Mrs Wharton from clinging

to it, and you will rejoice in the felicities which the method allows her. No doubt, the novel of the immediate future will not be cast in this mould. No doubt that writers of far less delicacy than Mr Galsworthy will attempt it and, in a way, belittle it. I am inclined to think that it will remain—not as a dead formula, but as a living, a classic, form. For I have never heard it assailed except on the ground that it is not realistic, not true to life, not in keeping with the spirit of our time. And that objection, I am afraid, will have to be over-ruled as irrelevant.

GILBERT SEIDES

ORCHESTRAL POETRY

THE HOUSE OF DUST. *By Conrad Aiken. 12mo. 148 pages. The Four Seas Company. Boston.*

IF it is true that all the arts strive towards the conditions of music, it is also true that the art of poetry most closely approaches chamber music. Only recently have the poets begun to realize the possibilities of a medium which, to the lyric intensities of a Richard Strauss, can add the contrapuntal sonorities of a César Franck. John Gould Fletcher in his *Black and Gold*, and *Green, and Violet, and Scarlet Symphonies*, Amy Lowell in her poetic transcription of Strawinsky, and finally Conrad Aiken, are all alive to the subtler and richer qualities which music offers. Alfred Kreymborg and Ezra Pound talk about the use of musical notation. Poets divergent in spirit and in method are at least united in an effort to squeeze the last fragrant drop out of the glowing orange of aesthetic synthesis.

There are certain clear difficulties, and some not so clear. Poetry that is a mere imitation of music is dull, even if it may not be banal. Poetry that seeks to discover and transmute in accepting the general laws of musical composition may widen its own horizons without trespass. So Conrad Aiken writes a symphony.

Curiously enough, *The House of Dust* is synthetic in its musical aspect, but eclectic in its aspect as a poem. Aiken states his theme, embroiders upon it in lovely variations, states other minor themes, passes from largo to scherzo, from scherzo to adagio, returns in his coda to the theme with which he opened. But for all the charm, one is recurrently arrested and disturbed by something too familiar in the melody, and sometimes it is as though one forgot the author of the symphony in listening to the "assisting artist": T. S. Eliot. Nor does it much damage the charge of eclecticism to find that among the poets whom Conrad Aiken echoes is one, Conrad Aiken. If *Prufrock* is here, so too is *Senlin*, and there are even atavistic traces of *Earth Triumphant*. It cannot be mere chance that offers such comparisons as these:

From House of Dust,

"We sit at tables and sip our morning coffee,
We read the papers for tales of lust or crime.
The door swings shut behind the latest comer.
We set our watches, regard the time."

From Eliot's Portrait of a Lady,

"—Let us take the air in a tobacco trance,
Correct our watches by the public clocks.
Then sit for half an hour and drink our bocks

"You will see me any morning in the park
Reading the comics and sporting page.
Particularly I remark
An English countess goes upon the stage,
A Greek was murdered at a Polish dance"

From House of Dust,

"Sometimes, I say, I'm just like John the Baptist—
You have my head before you . . . on a platter."

From Eliot's Prufrock,

"Though I have seen my head (grown slightly bald)
brought in upon a platter,
I am no prophet, and here's no great matter."

From House of Dust,

"I watch
my silver thoughts ascending;
Saying now this, now that, hinting of all things,—
Dreams, and desires, velleities, regrets."

From Eliot's Portrait,

"—And so the conversation slips
Among velleities and carefully caught regrets."

It is not the mere phrasal repetition which one remarks, but rather the insistence upon a certain attitude, the harking back to a sad, vague, somewhat amused disillusion, as though Aiken had caught from Eliot not a trick of thought, but a trick, when the thought came, of lifting his eyebrows in the same way. There is indeed one passage which might serve as the story of the author's literary adventures, concluding with the delicate "mauve" which must be caviar to the general:

" . . . You tried, as I remember,
One after one, strange cults, and some, too, morbid,
The cruder first, more violent sensations,
Gorgeously carnal things, conceived and acted
With splendid animal thirst. . . . Then, by degrees,—
Savoring all more delicate gradations
In all that hue and tone may play on flesh,
Or thought on brain,—you passed, if I may say so,
From red and scarlet through morbid greens to mauve."

It is odd to consider that the poet whose first book was so clearly influenced by the earlier Masefield should in this most recent volume be obviously indebted to Eliot.

This is not to presume that the *House of Dust* is simply a history of influences. As was noted above, Aiken echoes Aiken. The metaphysical preoccupation which distinguished Senlin, beyond its purely psychological import, is patent here as well. But here it is touched with a philosophy of aesthetics which is at once controversial and fascinating. It may be summed up in a passage toward the end of the poem, which serves also as a key to its title:

"We are like searchers in a house of darkness,
A house of dust; we creep with little lanterns,
Throwing our tremulous arcs of light at random,
Now here, now there, seeing a plane, an angle,
An edge, a curve, a wall, a broken stairway
Leading to who knows what; but never seeing
The whole at once . . . We grope our way a little,
And then grow tired. No matter what we touch,
Dust is the answer—dust: dust everywhere.
If this were all—what were the use, you ask?

But this is not: for why should we be seeking,
Why should we bring this need to seek for beauty,
To lift our minds, if there were only dust?"

This hints both at the poet's philosophy and at his fault. The supreme fault of this book is its beauty. The quoted passage is itself a quotation from a letter. But "the need to seek for beauty" is so self-evident on every page, in every singing line, that it belies its quotation marks. Again and again Aiken is betrayed by his sense of melody into forgetting the use of dissonance. It is as though he tried to convey the majesty of Beethoven by the charm of Schubert.

The final impression of the book is that of a hopeful experiment. The author has attempted something not too large for him to handle, but which he has not yet fully apprehended. There is a rich quality about the whole, and it is almost continually lovely. In spite of his fond eclecticism, Aiken is unique. But his emphasis should be rather upon his own peculiar individual vision, nor should he cover with melody the ugliness whose beauty he clearly recognizes.

BABETTE DEUTSCH

POETRY AND THE PROFESSORS

A STUDY OF POETRY. *By Bliss Perry. 12mo. 396 pages.*
Houghton Mifflin Company. Boston.

THE KINDS OF POETRY and Other Essays. *By John Erskine. 12mo. 186 pages. Duffield and Company. New York.*

PROFESSOR PERRY'S book is inaccurately named. His observations on poetry are confined almost exclusively to the metrical aspect of the art, and in making this arbitrary limitation he should have chosen a title consistent with the text. By avoiding, to a large extent, analysis of the intransigent rhythms of prose, he has not imperilled his critical position among the schoolmasters, and he has permitted himself to discuss Free Verse with admirable condescension. Not in a long time has a volume come forth so comprehensive in its knowledge of other men's ideas, and so exasperatingly deficient in its own; it is written with ripe academic delicacy, shows wide scholarship, is rich in apposite quotations, and yet it is committed to no opinions that will hinder its adoption by English teachers. The book is a digest of all the doctrine pertaining to poetry; the author's love for his subject, both sustained and sensible, will appeal to beginners; and though the last chapters dwindle down into pedantry, *A Study of Poetry* is indisputably the best student's manual that has yet been published.

Philosophically the book is neutral. Professor Perry enters the field heavily armed, appears, now in one cause, now in another, and swears allegiance to no one, unless we except Croce whom he does not thoroughly understand. The exposition of the processes of poetic creation stated as "impression, transforming imagination and expression" is a summary of the famous Italian's aesthetic, and while it is, in a measure, final, it is by no means applicable to art alone, and in the present case would have to be systematically directed to be of much importance. Philosophic idealism such as Croce's, itself borders closely upon art, and is for this very reason a dangerous medium for interpreting the essential meaning of

poetry, but the one dominating idea propounded so brilliantly by the Italian bears upon the problem with becoming emphasis. Croce postulates as inseparable the meaning, that is, the significance, and the form of art. When one subscribes in a general way to the underlying principles of Expressionism one should naturally accept its central argument, and Professor Perry's continual allusions to poetry as an idea dressed up in a form are somewhat shocking. With all its faults the theory of Expressionism arrives at truth when it establishes the artist as the manipulator of forms which have their own significance, when form and content coincide, when the meaning of the artistic fact is indissolubly associated with the expressive material. Form so regarded is, of course, subjectivistic, and exists apart from technique which serves only as a means of presentation. Thus the form of a poem is merely externalized by the technique of metre —its rhythm is more fundamental than the accuracies of periodic beats.

The basic rhythm of all the arts is the same. In painting and sculpture it may be defined as an accented series of bulk forms or contours so proportioned that the observer feels the sequence and is impelled from one part of the object to another easily and without need of intellectual effort. No law has been discovered by which a sequence of this sort can be produced, but there is a device, analogous to the metrics of poetry, whereby the action and reaction of variant lines may result in a pattern which assists the movement of the rhythm, in either two or three dimensions. This device, however, without the significant formal proportions of genius ends in a chain of monotonous repetitions. Rhythm in the profounder sense is something far more important than exact alternations, and in some of its strongest manifestations, the canvasses of El Greco, for instance, even approximate periodicity is entirely disregarded, and no two shapes follow definitely the same direction of movement. Divested of individual characteristics it is true that all the forms are related mathematically to a point of equilibrium, but at the same time, they appear when so abstracted to be frozen and lifeless, and to lose their rhythm in everything but name. The proportionment of unusual and personal accents which allow an unlimited range of temperamental distinctions in values is the first requisite of a rhythm that is more than a simple time or space pattern. It has

been proved irrefragably that no two persons approach a work of art, or are affected rhythmically by it, in an identical manner, though both may feel its order and recognize on analysis the relation of the constituent elements. Laws of pattern-designing can be laid down with precision, but the rhythm of a plastic composition depends entirely on the genius of the artist who, by force of feeling and acute intellectual discernment, juxtaposes harmoniously the varying phases of his experience and makes his work live and flow to a stronger beat than that of mathematical progression.

Professor Perry does not penetrate the subtleties of the poetry embodied in prose—he discourses of feet and stanzas, where his knowledge is large and secure. The rhythm of poetry, while capable of reinforcement by metrical divisions, lies 'beyond these mechanical relations. As in the other arts it is a problem of accentuations so disposed that a sequence is felt even when the integral parts are individualized to the point where the metrical accuracy is undone. When the imaginative fluctuations transcend completely all recognized syllabic schemes, verse disappears—but the poetry remains in prose. The co-ordination of what may be termed emotional forms, the massing of words into fluid groups which, by the union of sound and sense, induce certain feeling-attitudes, constitutes the interior rhythm that distinguishes poetry from verse. The rhythm has no more need of exact conformity with the regularity of metrical stress than have the highly individualized forms in painting with the geometrical pattern upon which they are imposed. Sometimes a line of verse defines a rhythmic unit; more often the flow is from line to line and from stanza to stanza, here spending its force in the middle of a verse, there breaking a poetic foot to achieve a full stop. The regulation of the cadences rests with the reader; no two persons respond to the movement in the same fashion—this is easily shown when a poem is rendered aloud, but everyone in reading is conscious of a succession of feeling-attitudes from which emotional satisfaction is derived. Poe understood this in his advocacy of the short poem; he maintained that after a limited period the rhythm degenerated into the deadening monotony of fixed stresses.

Professor Perry approaches Free Verse with a Laodicean smile. He is interested in it—no one with his unbounded reverence for poetry could be otherwise, but it is the interest one takes in a new

toy of ingenious contrivance, the tender toleration of the old man for the vagaries of youth. He relegates it to the "neutral zone," that fugitive borderland between verse and prose which has never been successfully defined. Unfortunately this vigorous movement, like the kindred heresy in painting, has been argued beyond all intelligibility by a maze of technical irrelevancies. The name itself is misleading: it were better called Free Poetry. As Wordsworth said, "The only strict antithesis to prose is metre," and metre from one viewpoint implies bondage. Since there can be no verse without metre it is hard to justify the contradictory title. There is, of course, no essential difference between the rhythm of prose and the rhythm of verse; both are raised to the dignity of poetry when charged with imaginative expression. Milton was aware of this, and Sidney as well, and Shelley's utterances on the question are so pregnant with psychological sense that they really foreshadow modern aesthetics. Whether verse is a better medium for poetic thought than prose is an open question; to the present time men have preferred the assistance of uniform stress; if the insurgents of to-day are encumbered by the fetters of metre there is no possible reason against their use of prose, or of a vehicle that partakes of prose in one part and of verse in another. But there is no "neutral ground." The instant Free Verse assumes an arrangement of words in which the recurrence of stress approximates a pattern it becomes metrical, whether more or less regular makes no difference —accent is incapable of exact formulation; when the periodic beats are dissolved by cadences that defy scansion, then Free Verse adopts the rhythms of prose. If the result is poetry the choice of means has been vindicated. Those critics who label the new endeavours "lazy verse" or "easy verse" are wanting in acumen. It is no easier to compose than the orthodox metres, and any one who has ever written a line of verse knows that it is far more difficult to evolve a passable poem in the new order than it is to stir up one hundred and forty syllables into an impressive pudding called a sonnet. Metre as such represents nothing; a child can learn it; it has no more significance than the ticking of a clock, than the pattern of cheap wall-paper.

The Free Verse movement carries with it the usual number of impostors and eccentrics that attend every revolt in art. In this respect it resembles modern painting. Young men and women with nothing to say have seized upon the absurd mannerisms of

English and French experimentalists, and have concocted amorphous medleys of erotic words which are profanely called poems; and ignorant worshippers of Picasso have missed the import of the remarkable Spaniard's studies, and have thrown upon canvasses a coagulated chaos of pigment which they solemnly exhibit as art. Happily the spurious element is rapidly perishing by its own efforts, and the artists of genuine talent are coming to intelligent recognition. The aim of Free Verse is the readjustment of form and content, not superficially, using form to denote a mould and content the idea, but on the foundation of all the arts where form and content become one, the objective symbol of the relation of impressions after undergoing fusion in the imagination. In this complex modern world new poets are rising, who, out of the unlimited disorder of their experiences, are building a rhythmic domain of poetry, an art close to life, bold and impetuous and beautiful.

Professor Erskine's book is less ambitious but not less interesting. It is a slender, sensitive work comprising four essays, three of which first appeared in collegiate magazines, the fourth is new. Himself a poet, the author is equipped with creative wisdom and with full knowledge of the poetic mind, and his English, always refined and often beautiful, is never marred by the habit of professionalism. He shows finely the overlapping of the literary *genres*, and the impossibility of exact definitions, and yet he reveals with exquisite clarity the meaning of the kinds of poetry when the art is considered "as an invariable function of life." He has rare insight into the aims of the new poetry, takes into account the differences between verse and prose, and analyses the work of Mr Masters with more intelligence than has been displayed by any other critic. He calls attention to the similarity of the Spoon River Anthology and the old Greek inscriptions, and commends Mr Masters for the unity of thought which holds this collection of epitaphs together, and which distinguishes it from the fragmentary poems of the Imagists.

It is hard to see how Professor Erskine could have done more in the small compass of his book: his essay on The Teaching of Poetry is testimony to his own eminence in this field; and his plea for the use of native legends should be an encouragement to every young American.

THOMAS JEWELL CRAVEN

BRIEFER MENTION

KORA IN HELL: Improvisations, by William Carlos Williams (8vo, 86 pages; Four Seas). What the doctor has made here may be less "pleasing" than the sometimes perfect, sometimes rather 1914 poems of *Al Que Quiere*, but one is hanged if it isn't quite as "significant." These phrases stand on their feet or sit on their bottoms well outside the family circle. One walks round and round the little well-born atrocities rubbing one's hands, though not precisely with pleasure. . . . For theory a severe romanticism of the local-fresh tincture of the old opium, may be: "The senses witnessing what is immediately before them in detail see a finality which they cling to in despair, not knowing which way to turn. Thus the so-called scientific array becomes fixed, the walking devil of modern life. He who even nicks the solidity of this apparition does a piece of work superior to that of Hercules when he cleaned the Augean stables." Nicked then, Hercules, what next?

DOMESDAY BOOK, by Edgar Lee Masters (8vo, 396 pages; Macmillan) is the record of a coroner's inquest over the body of Elenor Murray. The influence of one girl's death is traced in widening circles until it has affected people all over the country. Evidently the outline is similar to that of *La Mort de Quelqu'un*; it may even have been borrowed from that source. There is this difference however: that where Romains' novel can be judged as great poetry, the poem by Masters can be considered only as a magnificent, but badly written novel.

ANTHOLOGY OF MAGAZINE VERSE, FOR 1920, by William Stanley Braithwaite (12mo, 182 pages; Small, Maynard). This globule, dropped annually into the literary ferment of the country, precipitates its inevitable controversy. Whatever other *raison d'être* exists for the book, such as its convenience as a reference volume, or as a pat on the back to the aspiring, the certain flurry of debate it causes must be healthy. But as every reader resents some omission or inclusion, and each a different one, we can dismiss the argument on Mr Braithwaite's discrimination as futile, and note merely what an excellent showing the younger poets make, and also, as with his own belabouring of asterisks, what a remarkably excellent display is credited to those magazines not reputed as "literary" or "artistic," but so often tartly snubbed as "commercial."

MISER'S MONEY, by Eden Phillpotts (12mo, 305 pages; Macmillan), sinks its teeth into the emotional centre of a living story, handled in the deliberate, craftsmanlike manner inseparable from the serious work of Phillpotts. As the story gathers depth and power sure-footedly, so the writer's style keeps pace, neither leaping ahead nor lagging behind. His resourceful palette supplies colour and romance to what might otherwise be a flagging theme.

THE CAPTIVES, by Hugh Walpole (12mo, 464 pages; Doran) "To Arnold Bennett" and of Arnold Bennett, one is reminded by the dedication and by the quality of this new novel of Mr. Walpole's. The story is wound up in the atmosphere, very chilly and damp, of one of those narrow, painful, religious sects that build chapels in remote districts of London. But long and liberal as much of it is, a love affair which is impressive serves as a brazier in the general chill and damp. The lovers have a definite character, and their situation is arresting. But for them one gets the impression of a sequence of elderly relatives dying more or less shockingly, if they are not on their way to chapel.

FIFTY CONTEMPORARY ONE-ACT PLAYS, selected and edited by Frank Shay and Pierre Loving (8vo, 582 pages; Stewart Kidd). We can note this book as a sign-post on how far the little-new-art-theatre-movement has come from the regions of the precious and the amateur. There was a day not long ago when one-act plays were always presented to us in delicate, tinted brochures, or hid in the scented bosom of rare periodicals as love letters in the corsage. But with this book such childish things are put aside; there is a donning of working clothes, a hand-to-the-spade posture which means they've come to stay and fight for the survival in the practical world. This tome is as robust as *The Collected Works of Milton* or *Hints to Housewives*, and stands doubtless sturdily between them on many a bookrack. The selection of plays is liberal and discriminating, and the necessary translations are generally well made.

A CYCLE OF ADAMS LETTERS—1861-1865, edited by Worthington Chauncey Ford (illustrated, 2 vols. 8vo, 579 pages; Houghton Mifflin Company), sheds fresh lustre upon the family name, while at the same time it admirably serves to reanimate the crucial years of the Civil War. The correspondence of the American minister and his two sons has the distinction which comes from scholarship fused in men of action, and the triangular interplay of the three keen minds—all absorbed in the same problems—gives this collection of letters an exceptional value. They will be read not alone for their vivid and incisive commentary on social conditions and public questions, but for their intrinsic literary qualities and the new perspective which they afford on the formal biographical works—the *Education of Henry Adams* and the *Autobiography of Charles Francis Adams*.

RUSKIN THE PROPHET, and other Centenary Studies (12mo, 157 pages; Dutton). Under the capable editorship of J. Howard Whitehouse, seven well-known authors meet within the covers of this volume to celebrate the memory of the man who worked so hard to make art more social and society more artistic. To that large and ever-growing class of readers to whom John Ruskin is but a name and a legend, the essays of John Masefield, Laurence Binyon, H. W. Nevinson, J. A. Hobson will give refreshing and often stimulating accounts of the various phases of Ruskin's work; all the contributions, moreover, are pleasantly free of the uncritical adulation usually distinguishing "memorial volumes" on our established celebrities. An intelligent sobriety is the chief note of this work.

THE PASSING OF THE OLD ORDER IN EUROPE, by Gregory Zilboorg (12mo, 287 pages; Seltzer). A discussion of the Russian revolution and Sovietism by the Secretary to the Ministry of Labour under the Kerensky Government. A good many phases of the subject are touched on, but the main contention seems to be that Kerensky fell because he was the one uncompromising idealist of the movement, whereas Lenin had the adaptability to forgo pure theory when yapped at by the Allied wolves. This book of deliberate judgements shows a grasp of modern international relationships which may or may not be just, but is always illuminating. It is significant to note that nationalism is the mainstay of Russia's resistance, a paradox which was forced upon the Russian leaders.

BOOKPLATES, by Frank Brangwyn, R. A. (illus., 8vo, 69 pages; Lippincott), represents a vast talent in its little-known but most artistic phase. Here Brangwyn's love of big surfaces has been conditioned by the limited compass of the wood-block; he has put aside his huge illustrative machinery and confined himself to the rigid purity of black-and-white design, thereby advancing an art in which England has long excelled. The drawing is sharp and solid; there is an abundance of form in the incised outlines; and the execution of the plates is faultless.

DESIGN AND TRADITION, by Amor Fenn (illus., 8vo, 376 pages; Scribner), contains too much tradition. The book, which purports to give the historic development of architecture and the applied arts, is rich in omissions; the influence of the Orient is ignored and there is no mention of the striking contributions of the modern schools. A manual for the student who wishes to turn design to practical account—dry, but very thorough, and judiciously illustrated.

A HISTORY OF JAPANESE COLOUR-PRINTS, by W. von Seidlitz (illus., 8vo, 222 pages; Lippincott), is an English version of a valuable book. The author, appreciating the genius of Fenollosa, the Goncourts, and other writers, has produced an exhaustive historic catalogue. He approaches the oriental mind with wisdom and sanity, understands thoroughly both periods and processes, and traces the evolution of xylographic art from the black-and-white to the polychrome. Ninety-four reproductions are included, all well-selected, but some badly printed, especially those in colour, which have a garish quality entirely foreign to the originals.

LE LIVRE ET LA BOUTEILLE, by André Salmon (Camille Bloch, Paris). The Laforgian tendency remains one of three or four strongest in current French poetry, justifiably in so far as it has relation to modern reality, yet the two most satisfactory Laforgians are T. S. Eliot and Jean Cocteau who most strive against the influence; Eliot with his Marlowe-Webster admixture and Cocteau with his ideographic psychology. In this his fifth book of poems Salmon is acceptable, readable, polyglot, the *Museum d'Histoire Naturelle*, *refrain de Longfellow*, *orchestré pour jasz-band* and the *Boulevard Anspach*, are hung against the moon, "*sempiternelle affiche*," and there is in the highly accomplished result, no apparent struggle against the melancholy-ironic originator of the rhyme-schemes.

ANOMALIES, par Paul Bourget. (Plon, Paris). Comme il avait découvert une nouvelle langue, le jargon de la psychiatrie, Monsieur Paul Bourget crut avoir découvert de nouveaux sentiments, et c'est ainsi que le menteur devint le mythomane, etc.; le petit argot des observations médicales ne suffit malheureusement pas à nous donner le change et n'arrive pas à cacher la hâte de ce vulgarisateur à nous éblouir d'une érudition ingénue. Il est bon de signaler au passage cette marque de sénilité chez un écrivain médiocre, lequel fait encore illusion à quelques-uns.

ALBUM DE VERS ANCIENS (1890-1900), par Paul Valéry (A. Monnier et Cie., Paris). Le secret de la poésie, de la pensée, du génie, vaut-il la peine de dépenser une vie à sa recherche? Au seuil du livre, le sourire de l'auteur nous met en garde: n'a-t-il pas mille fois prévenu ses amis de ne voir que des gammes dans ces essais, qui conduisirent assez promptement leur auteur à un sincère et durable éloignement de la poésie? L'homme le plus mystérieux que je connaisse, Monsieur Paul Valéry sur lequel mille gens se croient dès aujourd'hui fixés, joue une partie singulière ou ce livre n'est qu'une pièce destinée à faire dame. Comment se contenterait-il de cette gloire dont le bruit s'élève peu à peu à travers le monde?

LA CONFESSION DE MINUIT, par Georges Duhamel (Mercure de France, Paris). Pour la première fois de sa vie, M Georges Duhamel a voulu écrire un roman. Depuis la Vie des Martyrs, ce farouche unanimiste, ce poète de tour d'ivoire, s'efforce de plaire à son public. Car M Georges Duhamel a un public bien à lui, composé d'étudiantes mystiques, de faux artistes, et de vieilles dames sentimentales.

Cette Confession de Minuit est faite par un pauvre diable, stupide et méchant, envieux et lâche. Malgré tous ses efforts M Duhamel n'arrive pas à nous intéresser aux malheurs de son héros. Il a beau tirer sur toutes les vieilles ficelles usées, pas une seule ligne de son livre ne nous émeut. Par contre à la lecture de presque toutes les pages on a peine à contenir une sérieuse envie de bailler.

MADAME IRNOIS, par Comte de Gobineau (Nouvelle Revue Française, Paris). L'absence est un moyen certain de connaître le succès. "Cachez-vous, dira un jour quelqu'un, et l'on vous cherchera." Ce passe-temps, si amusant soit-il, ne peut suffire à ceux qui aiment lutter et à ouvrir les yeux. Ces quelques pages du Comte de Gobineau permettent de retrouver l'atmosphère énervante du premier empire. Napoléon I faisait évanouir ces courtisans d'un regard. Singulier effet de la puissance militaire! Autour de cette ombre végétent un pauvre homme qui, trop riche, ignore la valeur de ce qu'il possède, une petite bossue, malade et solitaire (Mlle Irnois) qui ne sait que mourir en commençant à vivre. Ce récit, limpide "comme de l'eau de roche," rapide et courtois, enchanterait puis déenchanterait le lecteur attentif. Toute l'œuvre de Gobineau laisse cette trace. On ne peut l'admirer complètement, on ne peut l'aimer absolument. On abandonne ses livres sans regret, on les retrouve avec plaisir.—C'est sans doute ce que Gobineau, dilettante passionné, voulait par dessus tout. Emouvoir et décevoir, soupirer et sourire. On ne saurait penser à tout.

MODERN ART

THE pictures by "the douanier" now at last given a belated one-man show in the De Zayas Galleries vividly recall two sponsors of this artist and both now dead—Guillaume Apollinaire of Paris and Robert J. Coady of New York.

I met the first but once at one of those lightly arranged dinners that were always happening in the days when tourists were thick in Paris. An American traveller just in from Budapest with a pocketful of introductions to "chic types" asked me to meet some of them in one of the best restaurants on the left bank of the Seine. There was more than the usual animation when it came to fixing upon a menu. The *carte du jour* was so abominably written that our host who was new to Paris threw himself upon our mercy and asked us for suggestions. Immediately a hubbub arose that could be likened now to a peace conference but which at that time had had no parallel! A young gypsy musician, "of the female persuasion," as George Borrow puts it, expressed a longing for dishes of such startling extravagance (the restaurant was an expensive one even before the war), that others of the guests who had been recruited from the Cour de Dragon and had more modest hopes, expostulated loudly, doubtless fearing that the entire "feed" would be called off. Possibly the dinner never would have been realized had it not been for Guillaume Apollinaire, who somehow managed to gain the ear of one of the least inflammable of the *garçons* and impressed upon this worthy's memory the details of a perfectly gorgeous dinner which shortly began to come in.

I saw at once that he had exceptional powers but the name which the young gypsy person whispered to me at my request meant nothing to me for at that time the literature of the modern school had not begun to cross the seas. Beyond assuring himself that the dinner orders were exactly carried out, he said little—the young gypsy being the dominating figure at the feast. Later in somebody's rooms he signed a copy of his *Alcoôls* which our host presented for that purpose, and gave me a copy of his *Soirées de Paris* which he was then editing. When I got home I found my copy of the review to be entirely devoted to an appreciation of Henri

Rousseau, whose works I had only just that summer encountered, and to my delight, at the Salon des Independents. Apollinaire was at home one day a week, he amiably told me, in rooms on the Boulevard St Germain. We had agreed on several things, among others that the singing of the gypsy girl was disgustingly affected, so I meant to look him up thinking we might agree some more—but the principal reason was my curiosity in regard to Rousseau. However, the *débâcle* of 1914 put an end to studio life, and Apollinaire marched away to the war. Long before the bit of shrapnel sent him home to die in Paris I had learned to know his singular force as a writer. I yielded to it sometimes when actually thinking the words puerile, but I yielded to the tone rather than the words. Apollinaire spoke as one with authority, and the most unlikely specimens in Paris took from him what they would have taken from no one else. He was a "*Moi*," decidedly; the "*moi*," in fact, of the modern school.

Coady, who died last month in Brooklyn, was a great might-have-been. He was as keen for the art of Rousseau as Apollinaire was, and at once, upon his return from Paris, began proselytizing for it in New York, as well as for the work of Derain, Picasso, and the other notables of the new school. He was not an artist, however, and preached with difficulty. Besides, the local deafness, blindness, and general obtuseness bewildered him. He at once saw, for Paris had opened his eyes, immense possibilities for art in America, and lavished serious praise upon the distinctly native artists that the populace had already cottoned to in advance of the critics, such as Bert Williams, Tom Powers, Charles Chaplin, and the window-dressers of Broadway. He catalogued lists of desirable motives for artists that were as lengthly and as impressive as certain similarly intentioned poems of Walt Whitman. But the sluggish public that had smiled at his enthusiasm for the abstract paintings of the modern Frenchmen laughed outright at the idea that America could develop an art of its own. Coady died without much recognition from the public. He did not die, however, without vividly impressing his ideas upon a few of his contemporaries and ideas potent as his were have a vitality of their own.

I met him first in his Washington Square Gallery, attracted to the place by a curiously worded advertisement. The pictures on the walls were of the latest; Picassos, Derains, et cetera. I was

not shocked by them, but Coady, who conversed with me, suspected I was. He was a wiry, undersized man, excessively pugnacious in manner. He slammed the New York critics unmercifully and I joined in heartily. For every bad word he heaped upon the breed I heaped two more. We got along famously, but he did not guess my identity until he read my review in the newspaper which contained a few quotations from what we both had said about critics and a hint that I envied the cigarette-smoking and high talk that must go on about his fireplace of an evening.

Thereupon he wrote me to join in, mentioning even all the kinds of cigarettes that would be at my disposal. He did not quite trust me, however, at first, but the young man's belligerency was largely of the surface, or perhaps an armour he had assumed in protection against fools, and when I made it plain that I respected him and desired his friendship, he melted and handed it out lavishly as he had the cigarettes.

A Rousseau of his is in the present exhibition, a funny cow picture, but the *pièce de résistance* is the big Jungle, a grandiose reminiscence of Rousseau's stay in Mexico, with exotic monkeys peering out from the fronds of luxuriant ferns. It is extraordinarily handsome, and happily it is now owned in America and can be loaned to the Metropolitan Museum when the museum wishes. If that precious *événement* were to occur soon, and it is not so unlikely as it sounds, for things are changing fast, what laughter there would be in Heaven from poor Coady and poor Guillaume!!

HENRY McBRIDE

MUSICAL CHRONICLE

WE here in New York have been permitted, lately, to savour fully the music of the young Italian symphonists. The current season has been given a well-nigh distinguishing colour by the increased attention bestowed by orchestras and chamber-music organizations on their works. To be sure, not all the members of the group represented were names, merely, to our public. Some of their compositions have been performed here in bygone years. A tripartite symphonic poem of Zandonai's was played several seasons since by the New York Orchestra. Varese, in his single adventure with the National, tried to give us *Notte di maggio* by Casella. Ornstein, at Mrs Reis', played the *Nove Pezzi* of the same composer; his sonata for cello and piano was introduced in one of Casal's much too infrequent recitals. But this winter, due probably quite as much to the skilful propaganda of one of their compatriots established in American musical life, as to the fact that the number of their compositions available for performance is being increased rapidly by their indefatigable industry, the music of the young Italians has been served up in bulk and carried inevitably into our consciousness. *Italia* by Casella was given us, finally, after it had appeared on the programme of all the "pop" concerts of the universe, by the Philadelphia Orchestra; the New York played a suite drawn from his ballet *Le couvent sur l'eau*. Toscanini performed *Le fontane di Roma* by Respighi, and *Juventus* by de Sabata. The sonata for violin and piano of Ildebrando Pizzetti was played by the Blochs and by Kathleen Parlow. Of the members of the group, it is Malipiero, however, who has been most favoured. Three of his pieces were exhibited. The second set of his *Impressioni dal vero* were conducted by Bodansky at a concert of the National Symphony. His *Grottesco* for small orchestra was played, for the first time in any land, by the same leader at a concert of the Society of the Friends of Music. The string quartet, *Rispetti e Strombotti*, which won the Coolidge Prize last summer, was served up by Letz and his associates. And it is said that other novelties, by these already savoured and other of the young Italian symphonists, are being prepared for performance.

The exhibition has been a genuinely refreshing one. It has been quickening despite the fact that scarcely any of the compositions heard here, the in so many respects powerful sonata of Pizzetti included, have won one completely. —To be sure, the potentialities of Pizzetti and Casella and Malipiero have impressed vigorously. The sincerity and passion of the first, the orchestral colour of the second, the verve and agility of the last, have appeared to promise it may be great things. But, of course, none of them have given quite the thrill of new pleasure which must have been felt by the men upon whose ears there fell for the first time the tones of Boris and Proses lyriques. The Italian is no renascence of music in the sense that the French and the Russian movements were. None of the cisalpine symphonists have yet quite succeeded in coining music afresh. What, after all, the presentation impressed upon one most, and refreshed one with, was the evidence that a veritable revolution is commencing to take place in Italian culture. The appearance of this school signifies that there is a new sort of life in the Peninsula; that the long physical night of the folk is commencing to pass. More than all industrial adjustments, more than all the loud mouthings of the imperialists, the music of Pizzetti and Malipiero prove it. It is not alone because they have begun to express themselves with some fluency in the sphere of instrumental music, and shown themselves independent of the cumbrous machinery of opera on which their forbears relied so exclusively, that one feels their radicalism. One feels it because their music reveals them, whatever their powers, men of a sort fundamentally different from the Puccinis and the Leoncavallos and the Montemezzis. These are not base natures, calculating effects, pouring out syrup for flies, eyeing the gallery as they strike their melodramatic poses and hurl forth their impossible Italian rhetoric. These are aristocrats, concerned not with effects, but with their proper integrity. They are eager to develop their art in subtlety, to refine their own language. Though it cost them their popularity, they will express themselves. Not merely a solitary musician or two, but an entire band of intrepid adventurers have set forth to root out of themselves the meretricious tendency that has made the world for long suspect every Italian composer who comes bearing gifts. These young composers have begun making war on the Puccini in themselves, turning for example and support to the noble Italian instrumental-

ists of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Something within them has rendered odious to them the practices of their oily forbears. Perhaps, who knows, they still dream of the sort of popular success with which the composers of *La Tosca* and *Pagliacci* met. But because of the mind growing in them, not a one of them can attain, or will attain, it.

Nevertheless, even though one rests assured that a force is gathering in Italy able to give again the nation a veritable musical life, one remains a little afraid to prophesy it an immediate success, for all the latent power of certain of the radicals. Nor is the state of Europe, that threatens us all, all that makes one hesitant. The task before the young Italian composers is rendered particularly difficult by the internal as well as the external situation. All these young men are sophisticated. They are not working from their own centres. They have utmost difficulty in discovering their own formulas. Their condition is that of all men who are obliged to do the work of pioneers and blaze roads in wildernesses. For, cut off from a society which cannot nourish them, and which aids and abets the enemy, the Puccini, within, they are obliged to persist unrooted, to seek to create for themselves out of themselves an atmosphere conducive to production even while they ought to be applying their entire strength to their work. They must with one hand uphold the walls of their dwellings while with the other they feverishly seek to model. Much of their potency is lost to them. Unable to contact their fellows, floating like so many wretched rafts, they are left over-dependent for the stimulus that ought to be forthcoming from the life about them, on foreign models and foreign ideas, and over-sensitive to the atmosphere of Paris. Casella, Pizzetti, Malipiero, every other talented member of the group, shows in his work under how adverse a condition he has to create, how profound is his sophistication.

Casella shows it most classically. He is distinctly the cerebral. He is a man of the sort so uprooted that he cannot permit life to approach him directly. The instinctive element is weak in him; he appears to commence with an abstraction, a theory, and to set about incarnating it in music. He seems never so much the intellectualist as when, in Italia, he tries to be vulgar and instinctive, and, being an Italian, outrageously spaghetti. Then, because of the challenge to Chabrier and Bizet, we are made all the more sharply

conscious of the smell of the lamp in his intendedly rhapsodic gusts. Because of his unending apprenticeship to many modern composers, from Liszt to Strawinsky, he has even been accused of being an opportunist. But the accusation is an unfair one; Casella has always worked seriously in music; the *Notte de maggio*, if it proves nothing else, proves the sincerity of his struggle. If he has not despite his brilliance produced anything that is quite warm, quite spontaneous, it is principally because he is obliged invariably to commence with an abstraction, a literary idea.

He might become the critic necessary to the welfare of the group were it not for the fact that, like so many cerebrals, he intellectualizes everything except his thought. As a critic, he is responsible for many of the grotesque sophisms current in the musical world.

Pizzetti and Malipiero are, of course, talents of a fresher cast. Both are men for whom the future may have much in store. And yet, neither of them is completely "on their own." The violin and piano sonata of the former shows him beyond a doubt a man who goes to music because he has to speak. The crying, lamenting, cutting tones of the violin, the noble melodic line of the music, its vehemence, are truly racial, make one think of a modern Corelli. But Pizzetti, in this work, at least, has not quite managed to remain on his own base. If he has, in distinction to Casella, kept himself free of foreign influence, he has, nevertheless, been sucked, at moments, into Charybdis. The middle movement of his sonata, the *Preghiera per gl' innocenti*, descends into some very broad Puccini. Again Floria Tosca warbles her *Visi d'arte, visi d'amore*, while Scarpia cracks peanut-shells and prepares a rape. One dragon or another seems to wait its moment to spring out on every one of these young composers, and never to have to wait for long.

It is on the Scylla of foreign form and foreign idiom that Malipiero has been battered. His exquisite sensuality, his delight in the timbres of his instruments, his keen awareness of the resonances of the orchestra, have never achieved a quite individual expression. At moments he recalls the *Miroirs* of Ravel, the *Petrushka* of Strawinsky, even, in *Poemi asolani*, the piano-pieces of Schoenberg. Personal elements appear; then disappear again. One knows in him, of course, a veritable musician; the dissonances of the bell tones in the *Colloquio di campane* of the second *Impressioni dal vero*, the clown-like rhythms of the grotesque, the moment

when the piccolo shrills above the sudden descent and black rumble of the piano's tones in that composition, the strumming of the fiddles in the quartet, mark him among the living colourists. Unhappily, his compositions are never entirely clean, entirely whole. The form of the *Impressioni dal Vero*, of the grotesque and the *Rispetti e Strombotti*, is always a little uncertain, wavering. The string-quartet, indeed, is dead several minutes before the composer concludes. It may be, of course, that Malipiero's opera, *Sette Canzone*, produced last summer for a short while in Paris, and forced off the boards by the intrigues of Saint-Saëns, Bruneau, and other "patriotic" French musicians, is what the Parisian critics proclaimed it, an entirely authentic work. One would like to hear the opera. And yet, one persists notwithstanding in one's conviction that Malipiero has not yet discovered himself. The grotesque and the quartet, more recently composed than the *Canzone*, would not be quite what they are, had he in a work previously completed found his own idiom, his own form.

Consequently, despite one's awareness of the significance of their appearance, the respectability of the work already completed by them, one finds oneself a little shy of proclaiming the young Italian symphonists sure of achieving the national musical expression they have set forth so intrepidly to create. Still, whether or not they, in person, in our own time, succeed in writing the music of which they dream, their labours remain some of the most important being performed in the musical world. For, even though they themselves may never succeed in transcending their sophisticated situation, they will, through their struggle, unless the coming cataclysm washes everything of us away, create the atmosphere which will enable their successors to realize themselves unhampered. What they themselves want, what seems through its absence to be preventing them at present from expressing themselves massively, will, because of them, not be wanting "the new people, the young strangers, coming, coming, always coming." And if they succeed in effecting merely that, who will be able to say that Pizzetti and his companions will not have had the success which they, after all, most desired?

PAUL ROSENFIELD

THE THEATRE

THE revival of *ERMINIE* is full of lessons to the youngsters. Miss Madge Lessing shows us what our musical comedy has lost—and how dear and attractive, how gently prepossessing she makes it appear. Contrariwise Mr Norman-Bel Geddes shows us what we have gained, particularly in one setting of quite unequalled loneliness. Whereas Messrs Francis Wilson and De Wolf Hopper show us what we have had, have, and, please Heaven, shall always have, with variations. Mr Marc Connelly, having had the job of going through what must have been an exceedingly dull book, has recovered and made much of it pungent. But a new hand was no less needed for the music—and was not in evidence.

G. S.

WILLIAM ARCHER, having spent upon the hard-tack of Ibsen a wholly honourable youth, decided it was his turn. Having taken a very deep breath and with a deliberate abandon not unbecoming to one of so austere an age, he plunged. Old men do that sort of thing. The Green Goddess is the whole hog, and thereof George Arliss is the guts. As the divine and demoralized (he had been educated at Cambridge: *tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner*) Raja of Rukh, that accomplished feline won all hearts. And his spit was as good as his purr. He was coppered to a T: in checks and turban the *chic* crashed: it was like one of God's own wonders, and with His immanence all zigzagged and acrack. If our *matinée* idols could tint so magisterially, we should stop at nothing, no, not at playing *débutante*. When one saw shuffle past that file of native priests, one regretted Sir Beerbohm Tree: as leader of The High Church Party he would, with a navel orange, so consummately have filled the bill. To be fair to the honourable melodramatist, it should be stated the scenario too possesses considerable crackle. THE DIAL, ever on the lookout for unrecognized talent, takes particular pleasure in being able to hand Mr William Archer both wit and humour. Since the three *feringhee* are not to be put to death until to-morrow the Raja bestows upon them the run of the palace. And he dubs it, blandly, "Liberty Hall."

In *TAMURA*, a Japanese Noh, at The Neighborhood Playhouse, Michio Itow is, according to his wont, distinguished. *LA BOUTIQUE FANTASQUE*, which follows the Noh, instead of people who act like mechanical dolls (Japanese, to be sure, indicative, and O. K.) gives us dolls who act like people. Yet they retain, blessedly, dollhood. Thus the playing-card dolls are even more like cards when they move than when at rest; this is not only because cards generally do move, but more particularly because these particular cards move with corners. When the stage is darkened to represent the toyshop at night, things sag. We miss the brittle glare which should accompany staccato acting and we miss the colours too. And it is in this twilight that two dolls, by making love, overstep the bounds of doll-propriety; they unwisely approximate humankind. Dolls should be dolls.

GOOD TIMES at The Hippodrome is chock-full of novel effects: clitoris girls express their heads and faces from between the elephant-ear petals of uncannily unreal flowers. And some of these girls sport sure-ons. When we realize that this chorus numbers many hundred young women, we begin better to understand the underlying causes of the present servant-girl shortage. Mr Dillingham has much to answer for. (By the way, how does it come the cast never resort to sou'westers? With their smokeless megaphones these would go well.) One man gives a xylophone concert: his notes are as thin as his hair. Another makes to fling a stool at a painfully hired gentleman in a front box. The gent, overcome, upsets backward, chair and all. The auditorium collapses. This affair should be put under glass and preserved at The Smithsonian Institute: when we consider whence these good people, the spectators, come and how very ill at ease they honourably are (in Babylon) we perceive there is not likely ever again to be staged so important a demonstration of Professor Dr Sigmund Freud's theory of laughter. There are some very sleek diving girls.

TICKLE ME REVISITED: For the benefit of the provinces, among which Frank Tinney is now said to be circulating, I have here to correct an error. The lady with "the precise, nervous, and intelligent legs" is, unfortunately, called Olga Mishka. Frances Grant's are quite another story.

S. T.

COMMENT

TO S. T.

Your childish notice I have read

 Oh Callow Youth! scarce past your teens:

And though I've wracked my weary head

 I cannot fathom what it means:

The grand omniscience you flaunt

 I frankly own has made me gape,

For I, poor actor though I be,

 See through the culture that you ape.

Your classical allusions, too,

 Are just what I'd anticipate

Of any half-baked schoolboy who

 Had learned how to articulate

And con "*Maecenas atavis*"

 And "*Gallia Omnis*" in fair shape,

And "*Arma virumque cano*"—

 How dare you all this culture ape?

The artist's craft you plainly show

 Attracts your glib, precocious tongue.

How clever of you too to know

 A quartette when you hear one sung!

As for that touch of steak *Bearnaise*,

 Your gourmet's knowledge none can 'scape

And yet, S. T., it leaves me cold—

 This blatant culture that you ape.

WILLIE HOWARD

When so distinguished an ornament of the boards as Mr Willie Howard honours us with his attention, we take care our subscribers shall know it.

Those who recall the paragraph which so stimulated Mr Howard may find themselves by his allusion to "classical allusions" a trifle fogged. We hasten to state that we understand the poet-player (Willie Shakespeare, too, by the way, wrote trenchant verses)

here refers to the line from Ossian. According to Mr Howard's penetrating view (and many of our most cultivated readers will see eye to eye with him) this line, of howsoever humble an origin, had, through the agency of The Great Schoolmaster,¹ classicism thrust upon it. There are some things about which Mr Howard cares deeply.

Just the other day I had dropped in at our Statistical Bureau to have a look at the charts, and what I had there seen had considerably shaken (I confess it freely) my announced resolution to go on speaking the truth, so help me God, about the Winter Garden and David Belasco. For among Thespians I had found the suicidal curve to have taken a most alarming shoot: Stutz Motors at their hottest showed a trend scarcely less vertical. That is why this poem made me happy: it showed that Mr Willie Howard for one was not going to sulk.

*"Und wenn der Mensch in seiner Qual verstummt,
Gab mir ein Gott, zu sagen, wie ich leide."*

It is not only among the followers of Garrick and of Booth that a grave tendency has of late years become manifest. Painters, poets, sculptors, architects, composers, piccolo-players, and prose-men have all of them given signs of a strange depression. No doubt THE DIAL must shoulder the whole responsibility for having among Roscii applied the match to this powder, but an explosive despair is all about us. Should Mr Munsey, for example, inaugurate a campaign of truth-speaking about, say, the Poetry Society and Cale Young Rice, another of our charts would, we believe, register a parallel mounting. Months ago we set upon this problem, that of determining the provenance of this despair, our very best corps of sociological investigators; and by these trained gentlemen the entire trouble was authoritatively traced to a quite small conclave of conspicuously solemn and plump young men. Psychoanalysis had at last anatomized (so these latter owlishly hooted) the artist and his art. The whole affair was simple if unpleasant. If a man were an artist, that meant he was incapable of normal healthy activity and so had sought a substitute outlet among words, sounds, or colours. If the man were to be treated by their system, he would at last leap forth the real thing and would automatically and happily find himself as an artist impotent. Art was

¹ On the Study of Celtic Literature. Matthew Arnold. London. Smith, Elder and Co. 1867.

a disease and the artist a sorry dog. No wonder genius drooped, no wonder razors climbed, no wonder the red lines mounted.

But God reigns and the government at Vienna still lives. In the same mail with Mr Willie Howard's reassuring verses, there was brought me a communication from quite another big-wig. I refer to him who has (the Swiss Guard loyalty of Mr Thomas Eliot notwithstanding) as *The Master of Those Who Know* so disquietingly displaced the for so long a session not-to-be-sneezed-at, *ancien régime* Aristotle. Immediately taking action upon the report outlined above, I had grasped the bull by the horns, had gone for the facts to the right party, had written Dr Freud about the whole affair. My question to him had been summed up in the following sentences:

"Do you hold that if an artist is successfully psychoanalyzed he thereupon ceases to be an artist? For example, do you believe that if Leonardo da Vinci had been successfully psychoanalyzed he would thereafter have ceased to paint pictures of as great aesthetic value as those he had previously painted?"

Writing on January 10th from 19 Berggasse, Vienna, Dr Freud was so generous as to reply. In the last paragraph of his letter he pretty definitely settles the hash:

"Our experience, although not very rich in the analysis of painters and poets, has regularly brought out the fact that these artists are through analysis helped in their work. A Leonardo da Vinci has, however, not as yet undergone analysis."

Having glimpsed a certain pathos or wistful quality in Dr Freud's closing sentence, THE DIAL has organized a small group of domestic Leonards. These, it is proposed, shall (when the weather turns more seasonable) be shipped direct to Berggasse 19. We anticipate that our little undertaking will benefit the Leonards not less than Dr Freud. Applicants (the group is fortunately not yet complete) should present themselves at our Fifth Avenue Office. An American birth-certificate and an affidavit as to personal cleanliness (to be had from The National Academy of Design) are to acceptance *sine quibus non*.

Artists may again hold up their heads. As for certain smart Alecs . . .

